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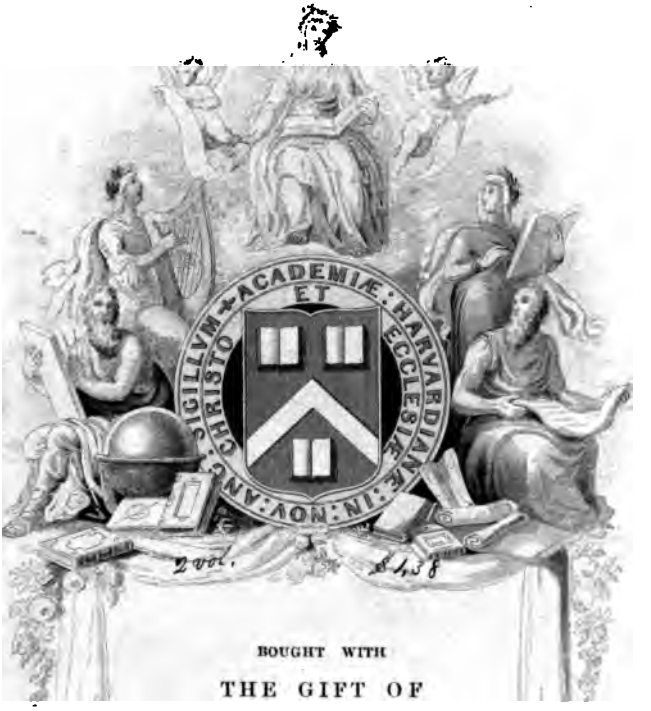

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FIVE YEARS IN TRINIDAD

AND ST. VINCENT:

A VIEW

OF

THE SOCIAL CONDITION

OF THE

WHITE, COLOURED, AND NEGRO POPULATION OF THE WEST INDIES.

By MRS. CARMICHAEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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In justice to myself, it is necessary to state that these volumes have not been got up for an occasion. The whole of the first, and part of the second volume, were prepared some time ago, before the agitation of the West India question by the present government; and the manuscript was then on the point of publication by an eminent house, with the special recommendation of an influential body of men. Circumstances, however, occurred to suspend the negotiation; and when I consider that, in return for patronage, more might perhaps have been considered due from me than it would have been in my power to give, I am not sorry that my volumes now stand upon their own imperfect merits.

Although in my sketches of the general management of an estate, and of the social condition of the black population of the colonies, I have been frequently obliged to speak of matters intimately connected with the question now before Parliament, a great part of my work has no relation to it, was not written in reference to it, and might be published

with equal propriety at any earlier or later period, as at this moment, since the domestic manners and social condition of a people are little affected by a legislative enactment. At the same time, there is little that I have written that has not an indirect bearing upon the matters now in progress; for it must be obvious, that in legislating upon the condition of a people, an intimate acquaintance with the character, manners, morals, and peculiarities of that people, is indispensable towards wise and wholesome legislation.

These pages are little else than an accumulation of facts; the results of personal experience and attentive observation; and if, at times, they warrant conclusions adverse to popular opinions, I can only say that I record facts, for which alone I am answerable, not for the conclusions to which they lead.

I am fearful that some inaccuracies, particularly in Negro language, may be found in these pages; and can only plead, as an apology for them, my absence from England while the work has been printed.

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THE WEST INDIES.

CHAPTER I.

First impressions—Negro Sunday market—An evening ride on shore.

I beheld the West Indies for the first time when, at sun-rise, on the last day of December 1820, we anchored in the lovely bay of Calliaqua, in the island of St. Vincent. I am not about to enlarge in the way of description;—man, rather than nature, is my object; but I may be permitted to say, that the scene which rose before me that morning with the sun, was of the most captivating kind. I saw a succession of small valleys, covered with canes and pasturage, intermingled with slight elevations in the fore-ground, upon which here and there

a dwelling-house could be distinguished, while the prospect was terminated by mountain heaped upon mountain, in that wild confusion that told of those awful convulsions of nature to which these tropical regions have been subject. The sea, too,—such a sea as in the temperate latitudes is rarely seen, held the island like a gem in its pure bosom; and mirrored there, the anchored ships, the moving boats, and the varied shores.

It was Sunday morning, and a novel spectacle soon awaited me. I saw, for the first time, bands of negroes proceeding from the different estates, some with baskets, and others with wooden trays on their heads, carrying the surplus produce of their provision-grounds to market. Accustomed to a devout observance of the Sabbath-day, I could feel little pleasure in gazing on a scene which in other circumstances would have given me unfeigned pleasure —for it was something to learn that negro slaves were in possession of, and could sell, the loads of surplus produce which I saw, and receive their

cash in hand; and it was also something to see that they were, with the exception of very few individuals, dressed in that manner which indicates an approach to real comfort.

After an unsuccessful attempt to procure horses on shore that day for so large a party as ours, and having made the necessary arrangements for landing the following day, we were speedily visited by several of our own people, who came on board to see us. I could comprehend little or nothing of what they said; for though it was English, it was so uncouth a jargon, that to one unaccustomed to hear it, it was almost as unintelligible as if they had spoken in any of their native African tongues. They seemed overjoyed to see their own master, telling him that if he had not come they could not have lived much longer without him. They were soon introduced to all of our party, and presented their hands, giving ours a hearty shake, and wishing us all health and happiness. I was again pleased to observe that all were well clothed; their clean

white linen trowsers and jacket, with a blue checked shirt, looked tidy and comfortable. I saw nothing of that servile manner which I had anticipated: all were frank, full of life and spirit, and talked to their master with a freedom which must be seen to be fully comprehended.

Early next morning, a boat came with fruit: there were only one negro man and a boy in it apparently about twelve years of age; they accompanied the motion of their oars with a song, or rather a sort of chorus, the words of which were only a repetition of "Shove her—shove her up," but repeated so quickly, that to me it appeared like any language on earth but English. As soon as the boat came alongside of us, the first words I heard uttered by our sailors to the little boy, were "You black devil, you!" at the same time bestowing a rope's-end upon him. I could not help shewing undisguised disgust at such apparent cruelty; but I found that the little fellow had been provided with a knife, and while the elder negro was

engaged in talking with the sailors, the younger one was busily employed in cutting away a rope. No doubt he had been previously instructed by the negro man to do so, and therefore it is probable he suffered unjustly. I had at first concluded that the conduct of the sailors was merely a sample of what I was now daily to witness from the white towards the black population of the West Indies.

About ten o'clock A. M. we landed, and were soon mounted, and on the road to Kingstown. I was delighted to find it much cooler on land than at sea, for notwithstanding the awning on board, the rays of the sun had been for the last few days insupportably hot, while the reflection from the water was so bright as to affect the eyes to a painful degree. After riding little more than two miles, we reached the top of an ascent from which we had the first peep of Kingstown. The descent from this elevation to the town, commands one of the grandest views imaginable: the Bay of Kingstown,— the valley in the centre occupied by the town,—

the charming cultivation,—the deep green of the woods, and the noble mountains or the calm sea terminating the landscape.

Independent of the beauty of the evening, there is something very novel in the appearance of a West India town, seen for the first time. The wooden houses, the green venetian windows, with their galleries, and house-tops without chimneys,—all these at first sight arrest the eye of a traveller: the number of the windows, too, in the houses is unlike anything to be seen in England, and reminds one of the representations of houses on china cups and saucers, and the absence of the window duty. My attention in riding from Calliaqua to Kingstown was continually arrested by some plant which I now for the first time saw, growing wild by the road-side, instead of being carefully cherished in a hot-house. I was particularly struck by the great luxuriance of the mimosa, which I could hardly believe was the same as that which I had seen so carefully nursed in England. We occasionally passed some very fine

trees, all of which were natural wood. The sour-sop tree is indigenous to this island, and is only valuable from its fruit, which was then nearly ripe. This fruit is something in size and shape like a bullock's heart, of a deep green, and covered with prickles like a hedge-hog's back. The inside resembles cotton wool; and there are numerous black seeds, about the size of an almond, interspersed throughout the whole. The taste of the fruit is agreeable, and it is said to be cooling and wholesome. The sour-sop, cocoa-nut,—king of these climes,—and a few plantains, were the only fruit trees I saw on this road. Charmed, as I could not but be, during this novel and romantic ride, yet there were many melancholy reflections continually forcing themselves upon me; particularly as I could not help remarking, that most of the negroes whom we passed were by no means so well clothed as those I had seen on Sunday: few of them had on a jacket; a shirt and trowsers seemed the general costume; and these not in the best condition, either as re-

garded cleanliness or repair. They seemed all to have hats; but those who were carrying baskets or trays, invariably put these on their heads, and carried their hat in their hands.

The few females we passed, were engaged in washing by the river side; for in this country, and generally I understand in these colonies, all the washing is performed with cold water, by the side of some running stream. The appearance of those women was disgusting: some of them, it is true, had apparently good clothes; but without one exception, the arms were drawn out of the sleeves, which, with the body of the gown, hung down as useless appendages; while from the waist upwards, all was in a state of nudity: sundry necklaces, and a coloured cotton handkerchief of showy colours, tied round their head, completed their dress. As we entered the town, although we saw many well clothed, yet several such disgusting spectacles were presented; and the little children, in by far the greater number of instances, were literally in a state of nature. We observed several

coloured women (that is, Mulattoes) at the doors and windows of houses, the dresses of some of whom would have been elegant and graceful, had they been more modest. We had now reached the house which was to be our residence for some time. I was particularly struck, in approaching, by the Otaheite gooseberry tree. The tree itself is not remarkable otherwise than as being of an uncommonly lively green; but the fruit is very peculiar and rich in its appearance, growing in clusters, in size and colour resembling the common Muscadine grape; the clusters are attached to the stem and branches of the tree, and are so closely set, as literally to prevent the stem and branches from being seen. This gooseberry is extremely acid, without any other flavour, and is unfit for use unless when baked in tarts, when it serves as an humble imitation of the English green gooseberry. As I entered the house, I was not sorry to find it, although in a town, very rural in its appearance. The tamarind tree, and the beautiful blossoms of a large scarlet rose com-

monly used in the West Indies as an ornamental fence, with the flowers of the plumeria rubra, were all growing luxuriantly around the house. Upon alighting we were received by two of ————'s negroes: one, a tall, masculine-looking woman, clean but ragged; the other, a young man apparently under thirty; badly clothed, but clean. They received us very kindly, and shook hands with us; although the female by no means looked so well pleased.

This first evening we passed in a gentleman's house at a short distance from our own: it was spent much in the same way as in England, drinking tea between seven and eight, and music filling up the remainder. The drawing-room we sat in entered through the hall, and when the music began, I heard a noise in that direction. The lady of the house observing me turn round, said "that is only the little negroes; they are dancing there; and are all extremely fond of it." I had every inclination to take a peep, but I was afraid if they saw me, they would stop. I have since found by experience, however,

that had I gone, it would have proved no such interruption, for negroes are not at any age at all abashed by the presence of a stranger. And thus passed the first twelve hours on shore in a West India colony.

CHAPTER II.

SKETCHES OF THE WHITE POPULATION.

State of society; erroneous opinions respecting the life of a planter—His domestic economy; drudgery, drones, frugality, and general manners of living—Markets—A West India ball—Creole children—Correcting an error—Religion—Trials of planters and their families—Demoralization; an instance of negro kindness.

In the last chapter, I have presented something like a journal; but I purpose now recording the results of my five years' experience and observation in St. Vincent and Trinidad, rather than throw my observations into a regular narrative. It is evident that the sameness of a residence could not afford variety for this,

though, to illustrate my views, it will often be necessary for me to recur to a personal narrative in my statement of facts.

It is also important to observe, that much of that which forms the subject of these volumes is strictly applicable to many, and in a great degree to all the West India colonies; though my observations have been made in St. Vincent and Trinidad. Negro character is the same, whether it be exhibited in St. Vincent's, or in any other island; so we may say the interests, and consequently the conduct of the planters are: and although a greater or a smaller sphere, and greater or less prosperity, may in some degree influence the state of the white society, and perhaps even, the *condition* of the negroes; yet the circumstances in which the white and black population are relatively placed, — their respective occupations, — their interest,—the climate,—are all so similar, that no very marked dissimilarity can exist in the character and conduct of the population of the different islands. In the present chapter, I

shall offer some observations upon the state of the white population.

I will venture to assert, that there is no class of men on earth more calumniated than the West India planters. I do not speak at present (for that I shall enlarge upon in due time) of their conduct towards the negro population. I speak of their general character and mode of life, as members of society. I had heard, and all have heard, West India planters spoken of as a peculiar race of men; imperious,—unpolished,—men who had raised themselves from poverty to affluence, and who reclined in the lap of luxury in tropical ease,—each, a bashaw lording it over the creatures of his little community.

It is no doubt certain, that there are individuals in the West Indies who have raised themselves, probably from very low situations, to what may be called a comfortable independence, but it is scarcely necessary for me to say, that the affluence which once in some degree existed, is to be found no more: and it would

now be more correct to say, that with very few exceptions, they, although nominally proprietors, are really nothing else than the farmer for the British merchant, who receives their annual produce.

The planters (at least I have not met with one exception) are hard-working men; up before sunrise, and often the first in the field of a morning, and generally the last there at night. Many of them in these hard times keep no manager, and have only one or two overseers to assist in the regulation of the estate, without whom, the business of the estate could not go on; and these must be *white men*, that is to say not men of colour, for of course there can be no objection to a Creole.* It has been more than once attempted in St. Vincent, and I may say in all the colonies, to introduce a coloured overseer, but the negroes have uniformly re-

* As the term Creole is often in England understood to imply a Mulatto, it is best to explain that the word *Creole* means a native of a West India colony, whether he be white, black, or of the coloured population.

sisted it,—they having a most decided dislike to the coloured population.

Some fifty years ago, colonial society was upon a very different footing from what it now is. I was informed by a very old resident in the West Indies, who had resided in many colonies, when conversing upon the subject, that about forty years ago or more, the only distinction of ranks consisted in white, coloured, and negro persons. Tradesmen of every description, *if white*, were admitted and invited to the best society; and although moving himself in that sphere, he told me he distinctly recollected a young man turning round to him, while standing the next in a dance, and saying, with a low bow, "Sir, I will thank you very much for your custom." The young man was a respectable member of society in his way; a blacksmith. It is needless to add that these days are long gone by, and that there is a sufficient number of a secondary rank among the white people, to form a society of themselves. I would say, that the town and country society

varies quite as much as it does in Britain. The country gentlemen, that is to say the planters, seldom come to the colonial town upon pleasure, and are always much occupied with their agricultural concerns, and anxious to return to their properties. Those, indeed, who possess estates in the neighbourhood of the towns, of course mix in some degree with the inhabitants of the towns, the society of which may generally be said to be composed of those who hold situations under Government; of barristers, medical men, and merchants; and to these must be added, the military, and the naval officers of such ships as chance to be on the station, towards whom the utmost hospitality, consistent with their circumstances, is invariably shewn by the West India proprietors.

With hardly an exception, drinking to excess is unknown among planters,—or indeed luxury of any description: destitute of those common comforts, which every British farmer enjoys, but which no money can purchase in a tropical country, they are also without those luxuries

which are to be found in the East Indies. Some few indeed have good houses; but the majority are contented with a very humble dwelling, furnished, too, in the simplest style imaginable.

The comfort of a family every one knows to depend greatly on servants; but, contrary to the common belief, planters are miserably off in this respect. I never saw any servant, whether male or female, that would have been reckoned even passable in England: and to a stranger, it is surprising to see how contentedly they bear the necessary privations—in fact, considering daily theft and constant negligence, with a thousand other grievances of the same nature, as matters of course.

Many families who live in town are not the proprietors of their servants, but hire them from their masters, to whom they pay a certain sum, while they feed and clothe the negro,—or, which is more customary, give an allowance to the servant, who feeds and clothes himself. Some few have free servants; but this seldom answers,

from various causes, which will be afterwards assigned.

The duties of a planter's wife are most arduous: distant from markets, and all the few comforts that a small West India town even does afford, she must continue to live upon the stock raised on the property, or absolutely go without. The stock, therefore, becomes her immediate care; and besides being forced to superintend pigs, poultry, &c. with sundry other occupations of the same nature, she must attend also to the garden, and that most minutely; otherwise, she would reap little from it. Then she has to listen to all the stories of the people on the estate,—young, old, and middle aged: all their little jealousies and quarrels she must enter into, and be in short a kind of mother to them all. The negro children must be daily watched; she must see them swallow their physic when necessary; reward the good, and admonish the bad; visit the sick,—encourage them,—and take, or appear to take, an interest in all that concerns them.

It is more than probable, too, that she not only cuts out, but sews a great proportion of the clothes for her house servants. Then, again, the mode of washing in the West Indies greatly adds to the domestic labours of the planter's wife: the linen is dipped in the river, and soap rubbed upon it while it is laid over a stone, after which it is beat with a flat heavy piece of wood, made for the purpose; and, lastly, the article itself is dashed upwards and downwards upon the stone, with which the operation concludes.

It is utterly impossible for those who have not gone through such scenes, to comprehend the unnecessary accumulation of work thus thrown upon the mistress of a family, who must begin to button and string the whole wardrobe every time it returns from the wash, as it is a rare occurrence if any of those appendages return; the patching and mending of a West India family is, consequently, "never ending—still beginning:" all this a planter's wife must see done, and also give her own active assistance

to the completion of it. The nature of the climate, too, renders it necessary that all pantries and store-rooms be out of doors—at least with very few exceptions. A great increase of trouble and consumption of time is thus occasioned; and all is thrown upon the planter's wife, for none of her servants think of what is required, and indeed prefer making their mistress return again and again to the store-room during the day; as by this, more frequent opportunities of pilfering are offered to them.

All these avocations require more time, activity, and temper than many people may be aware of, and nothing short of a trial of such a life can give any one a perfect idea of the various annoyances attendant upon it: nor is this all; for very many, besides these labours, bake the pastry, and make the puddings and custards. Let those who talk of the luxuries of a West India life, judge whether they would exchange their home in Britain, however poor it may be, to undergo all this. I can safely state, from personal experience, that so little reliance is

to be put in any servant—even on him who may call himself head servant—that the every-day work of laying the table for dinner must be looked at in order to ascertain that nothing is wanting on the table. I need scarcely say that those ladies who have young children, have still more to do; and in their personal attention towards their offspring during infancy, they are the most anxious and affectionate of parents, always suckling their children, and generally to a longer period than is usual in England; and never, for any party of pleasure, trusting their infant to the hands of others. Their conduct in this respect is most exemplary, and very different from our fashionable mothers in Britain, who either stint their infant of its natural support, or abandon it to a mercenary nurse.

It is much to be regretted, that although West India parents are anxious about their children's bodily wants, to such a praiseworthy degree as to grudge no personal trouble, that yet they are, with hardly an exception, indifferent

to their conduct in early childhood, neglecting their religious and moral education to a melancholy degree. So soon as a little Creole gets upon its feet—and this they do much earlier than in Britain, generally at about ten or twelve months old—from that time a destructive kind of accidental education commences.

The house being all open, and the domestics' houses generally situated very near, they soon find the way to them, and to the kitchen. Negroes are like all uneducated people, most unfit managers of children: they are pleased with their prattle, so long as they do not disturb them in what they are about; they are fond of teaching them to mimic, a talent which is conspicuous in negroes, and early teach them deceit, while they easily bribe them over to silence by something good or sweet.

In St. Vincent, and in *most* of the colonies, there are few children who remain in the island after ten or at most twelve years of age, for there is no possibility of procuring either public or private teachers, beyond merely in reading and

writing, and those of very ordinary attainments; and it is needless to say that even were a mother sufficiently well informed, and calculated from her natural talents and temper to educate her daughters at home, her other domestic duties are of so arduous a nature as totally to preclude her doing so. Some few families have tried a governess, but it has been found not to answer; for they almost invariably marry soon after coming out—so that at present there is really no alternative, excepting that of sending children to Europe, or leaving them to grow up totally ignorant. As for boys, there is no possibility of educating them in the West Indies.

To those who have neither personally experienced nor witnessed such scenes, it is impossible to conceive how much this necessary sending away of all young Creoles for the means of education, operates to their disadvantage. Parents look forward to this necessity almost from the birth of their darling, who becomes doubly dear from this consideration. From the

moment of this separation indeed, the tie may be said to be broken: boys in many instances never return to their homes; and girls, if they do return, return only to be almost immediately taken from it again by marriage.

These much to be dreaded realities, press so constantly upon the minds of both parents, as to operate strongly against the future welfare of the child, who is over-indulged to a great excess; because, looking forward constantly to the moment of parting, they cannot bear, as they say, to cross the poor child. But these evils, as well as those which are engendered by the too frequent intercourse of children with negro servants, are partly unavoidable, owing to the constant cares and arduous duties which I have already described as devolving upon the planter's wife: and I may also use an argument I have frequently heard used by West India mothers in favour of permitting this intercourse; that if their children were kept from the society of the young negroes, they could not have those kindly feelings towards young

negroes which they ought to have. And this, by the by, leads me, before returning to the grown up population, to digress for a little upon an opinion which I have more than once heard at home,—that creole children are permitted and encouraged to use the negroes, both young and old, tyrannically.

The fact is, that children brought up as I have described them to be, are not likely to treat any one around them either with respect or self-denying kindness; but in justice both to parent and child, I must remark, that when instances of rudeness occur from a white child to a negro, I feel satisfied, after having minutely considered the subject, that their conduct is not produced by any peculiar dislike, or want of affection, towards the servant *as* a negro; it proceeds wholly from their totally neglected education; and in saying so, I give my reasons for adopting this opinion, which I formed in consequence of observing, that young creoles are infinitely more disobedient, disrespectful, and clamorous towards their parents, than

towards the negroes by whom they are surrounded; nay, in most families, I have observed, that when one servant in particular was appropriated for the children, she had twice the authority of either parent; and I have seen many cases where the affection of the children towards one or more of the negro domestics was unbounded, and where they took no pains to conceal that they preferred the society of those servants to that of any white person.

I have many times observed the children, upon going to bed, run to kiss those negroes who were most about them, and say good night; and I have seen children, who were habitually rude upon contradiction, habitually kind and affectionate to the negro servants. I had many opportunities of seeing young people of both sexes, at an early period after their arrival in the West Indies, after having been absent six, eight, or ten years for their education, and in all of those numerous instances, I perceived the greatest anxiety on the part of these young and newly arrived creoles, to see those negroes

whom they had best known in their childhood, and it was evident how well and how kindly they remembered them, among all the new objects that Europe had presented to them. In no case did they omit to bring presents suited to them; and it would be only a suppression of truth were I not to add, that there seemed much more warmth of affection on the part of the child, than on that of the negro, who upon such occasions seemed always more lost in amazement at the great change in "young massa," or "misses," than in displaying those affectionate feelings, which are occasionally to be met with among old English servants towards their masters' children.

The feelings of negroes are strong, but quickly evaporate in a few passionate expressions of grief or joy, according to the occasion. But after an absence of many years, they have almost forgotten their young friends; and when they have made a few set speeches, such as wishing "that young massa may grow up to be a rich man, and have plenty of fine *negers;*"

or that "misses may soon have a pretty, young, rich husband," (and heré I repeat word for word what I have heard used upon occasions of this kind), they shake hands, examine the dress of the new comer,—for they are very curious and observant as to fashion, and depart; not, however, without first asking what young massa has brought them out of England.

I shall be happy if I have successfully refuted the opinion that young creoles are taught to behave tyrannically towards negroes, *because* they are negroes; it is a point, this, of great consequence to be represented fairly, and I think I have explained the real state of the matter when I admit, that the children of colonists in general, from being neglected in their early education, and left without steady or systematic control from either parent, do conduct themselves, with few exceptions, in a manner regardless of the feelings of those around them; but that they do this *to all* who come in their way, and to their parents generally more determinedly than to any others.

Much more might be said upon this subject, but that it will be found again to occupy our attention when we come to consider the character, customs, and situation of the negro population.

I repeat, then, once more, that there cannot be a more unjust aspersion, than that children are taught to despise a negro. No one who has lived in the West Indies, at least for some time back, can adopt such an opinion, unless he has absented himself from society, and formed his ideas from any thing but actual and impartial observation.

But I now return to the grown up population and white society. When I first arrived in the West Indies, there was little of what we call visiting "in an easy way;" family dinners, or a quiet cup of tea were unknown; ceremonious dinner parties were the only media of intercourse. As my book is not meant merely for the great, some I think may be pleased with a sketch of a dinner party in the West Indies.

I will pass over the inconvenience of walking or riding, under a tropical sun, even the few hundred yards that separated my house from that of my entertainer,—and the crowd of visitors arriving and arrived outside the door,—and suppose myself ushered in, having smoothed down my dress, and arranged my curls, and in some degree recovered from the inconveniences of heat, a strong breeze, and abundance of dust. We were invited to dine at five in the afternoon, and as I had something short of a quarter of a mile to walk, I had the full benefit of the concentrated rays of the tropical sun.

Dinner being announced about six, we were ushered into a room by no means large or lofty: two long tables were soon filled, and we sat down, in number between thirty and forty—the gentlemen greatly predominating; there was very little general conversation during dinner, and, so far as I could see, not much even between those who sat next each other. Every thing looked brilliant, however, from the numerous lights (for it was already dusk), and

the handsome shades, which are a great ornament to the candlesticks. The windows and doors all thrown open, displayed one of the most picturesque scenes imaginable; it was fine moonlight, and the beauty of a moonlight view in these latitudes, can be conceived by those only who have seen it. The dinner was like all West India dinners—a load of substantials, so apparently ponderous, that I instinctively drew my feet from under the table, in case it should be borne to the ground.

Turtle and vegetable soups, with fish, roast mutton (for in three weeks' residence I had not seen or heard of beef, lamb, or veal), and turtle dressed in the shell, with boiled turkey, boiled fowls, a ham, mutton and pigeon pies, and stewed ducks, concluded the first course. Ducks and guinea birds, with a few ill-made puddings and tarts, &c. formed the second course. The heat of the climate formed an excuse for the indifferent pastry; and experience soon taught me that it was impossible to make light flaky pastry, such as we see every day in England. However,

it must be admitted that West India cooks do not excel in the art of making sweet dishes, if I except a dish yclept "floating island," which they always succeed in admirably.

I had heard so much at home of the luxury of the West Indies, and how clever black servants were, that I looked for something, not only good, but neat and even tasteful; but I was astonished to see the dishes put down without the least apparent reference to regularity, and I felt a constant inclination to put those even that were placed awry. Many of the guests brought their servants with them, and there was therefore an immense concourse of them, of all descriptions: some with livery, and some without; some with shoes, but generally without; some wore white jackets, others were of coloured striped jean; some were young, some old; some were coloured, and others negro men; there was no arrangement, co-operation, or agreement among the servants, save only in one thing, and that was in stealing; for a bottle of wine was hardly opened, until

some clever hand whipped it away, and without any apparent fear of detection or sense of shame, openly handed it out of the window to those in waiting to receive it. In short, the servants' mouths were stuffed full the whole time; and so occupied were they all in making the most of a good opportunity, that the ladies' plates would never have been changed, had it not been for the repeated and loud reproof of the gentlemen.

Such a length of time elapsed before the second course made its appearance, that I began to conclude that among the many novelties I had seen, another might be, that the servants retired to consume the remains of the first course before they again made their appearance with the second: however, after the lapse of a long, fatiguing, and silent interlude, the second course did appear, and glad was I that it was dismissed sooner than the first. A good deal of wine was drank during dinner, but not more than is usually consumed at dinner parties in England. The wine in general use in the West

Indies is of the very best quality; and malt liquor, particularly London porter, acquires a degree of mildness and flavour far beyond that which it ever attains in Britain. Beer, porter, and cider, are all drank at West India dinners, but sparingly; and I apprehend these are by no means favourable to health in a tropical climate, at least to the generality of constitutions. The most general beverage, and by far the safest, is either brandy or rum and water, such as would be drank in England: the gentlemen in the West Indies make it extremely weak, about the proportion of one glass of spirits to three English pints of water:—this beverage is often rendered more agreeable to the palate by being milled,—that is, beat in a large jug or glass rummer with a long three-fingered stick, somewhat resembling a chocolate stick; this being done quickly, the liquor froths up, and forms at once the most cooling and safe beverage, whether before or after dinner. Punch was formerly much in fashion, but it is now fairly exploded, excepting by one or two old people,

who naturally prefer what they were accustomed to in their youth; but these take as small a proportion of spirits in their lemonade, as the others do in water—but to return to my dinner party.

The arduous business of dinner being concluded—for the cheese was put down with the second course—the cloth was removed, and the dessert made its appearance. It was January, and I felt somewhat astonished, when I looked at the table covered with pines, sappadilloes, pomme de rose, water lemons, grenadilloes, &c. that amidst all this, I should see nothing of the far-famed and really excellent West India preserves, so much prized in England. Just as I was meditating upon green limes and preserved ginger, the gentleman who sat next to me offered me some preserved raspberries, just come from England, by the last ship; the emphasis which was put on the word raspberries, at once shewed me that English preserves were quite as much esteemed in that country, as West India preserves are in Eng-

land. I ventured to tell him how astonished I was to find that they relished our preserves, when theirs were so much superior. He assured me, that before long, I should alter my opinion: and I found this to be perfectly correct.

The ladies did not remain long at table, but soon retired to the drawing-room; but there, nothing like conversation took place,—indeed the constant domestic drudgery of a female's life in the West Indies, married or unmarried (for the latter, although not occupied with the *menage*, are engaged in dress-making and mending—negro servants being wretched needle women), leaves them no time for improving the mind, — and in society, the ladies are too generally found distinguished for that listlessness, and meagreness of conversation, which arise from an uninformed mind.

As soon as the gentlemen came in, coffee and cake were handed round, and an almost immediate bustle followed; for a heavy though short shower of rain had fallen, and the ladies began to ponder upon the probable results of walking or riding down Mackay's Hill, through a miry,

slippery road, in a cloudy night, between nine and ten o'clock. We had resolved to walk; and, wrapped in warm cloaks, bonnets, and thick shoes, we took our leave. As we expected, the road was very bad, and so dark was it, that we could make no choice where to place our footsteps,—some of our party began seriously to lament the probable ruin of a satin slip, while the gentlemen were no less pathetic on the subject of their silk stockings. Where a party of this kind is sufficiently numerous, there is generally no want of amusement; in fact, it was only during the walk home that any thing like cheerfulness or ease appeared: our adventures, however, were soon ended; for ten minutes brought us to our own door, and as I seated myself quietly at home, I could not help thinking of Miss Edgeworth's inimitable description of Mrs. Rafferty's dinner, in her "Tales of Fashionable Life."

Dinners, if I may so express myself, took a more rational turn before I left the West Indies: they began to find out that those parties were both expensive and dull.

Small social parties came more into vogue: the ladies began to talk to the gentlemen—and certain is it, that the latter were amazingly improved by the change of system: cards became, less and less, the resource of the evening, and dancing succeeded instead: this gave employment to the young, and amusement to the old: music first became tolerated, then listened to with some interest; and before I left St. Vincent for Trinidad, if there were no musicians, there were at least many who liked music and encouraged it; and finally, the piano-forte and quadrilles, to a great extent banished cards and scandal.

Even small dinners, however, were by and by found expensive; and times began to get rapidly so bad for the colonists, that these could no longer be kept up; and, excepting upon great occasions, these too were completely abandoned.

Small evening parties, which created little or no expense, except the few additional cups of tea or coffee, and a few glasses of weak wine

and water, now became common. Quadrilles were the general amusement. These parties usually met about eight in the evening, and broke up before, or at eleven, at farthest.

Great balls are not often given. The immense expense is the principal objection; and the difficulty of collecting the female population is another.

In St. Vincent, and many others of the colonies, the roads are hilly and often very bad: it is almost dangerous for a lady to ride,—and in many places it is impossible to drive a gig. All these things combined, prevent many great balls from being given; but when one is really in agitation, all the island is in a buz, and the coloured women are as active as possible, huckstering their trays full of satins, gauzes, ribbons, and white shoes and gloves, &c. &c. to the very last hour.

Let me present a sketch of these balls, given at the house of the late Hon. Robert Paul, whose estate was close to Kingstown.

The house was situated upon a rising ground

just above the town, and we had to walk but a short distance to reach it. The admiral on the leeward island station and his Majesty's frigate the *Tribune*, lay in the bay at the time, and the officers were all of the party; there was a number of fine young men, and some uncommonly interesting boys among the midshipmen.

One of the officers happened to be an old acquaintance and a countryman: those whom we only know slightly at home, when me meet abroad, are hailed as dear friends, and we give a hearty shake of our hand to the man whom we only bowed ceremoniously to at home. It was a lovely evening, and as we walked up the avenue lined with cocoa-nut trees, and reached the front of the house, a prospect of singular beauty opened before us.

Kingstown bay lay in moonlit panoramic splendour; the sea was smooth as glass, and if an occasional air was wafted over it, the ripple only served the more to shew the effects of moonlight.

On one side was Fort Charlotte, and on the other, Dorsetshire Hill; the town lay as it were

at our feet, and the landscape terminated in the lofty mountain of St. Andrew, covered with wood to the very summit.

The little parterre and shrubbery around the house were extremely neat,—the estate negroes, and many coloured people, some in full dress, were already crowded round, or in the house, and every voice and countenance bespoke joy and expectation. We found a comfortable chamber wherein to change our shoes, and lay aside our shawls,—a luxury often not to be obtained in St. Vincent, from the very small and inconvenient houses which most of the colonists possess. This house, even in England, would have been reckoned only a pretty cottage, but still it contained two tolerably sized public rooms, and a few good chambers, and was so much more neat and comfortable than any thing I had seen, or did ever see in St. Vincent, that I was charmed with it.

The kind proprietor and his lady are now no more,—but should these pages ever meet the eye of their children, may I hope that

they will pardon the liberty I have taken in thus describing what I felt to be one of the most interesting and truly beautiful scenes I beheld in the West Indies.

If I had been rather astonished to see a public ball-room (which I had some time before) crowded with coloured people and negroes, I was still more surprised to find a private one equally so in proportion: here were young, old, and middle-aged negroes; and as the children grew sleepy, they went into their "Misses" chamber, which opened from the drawing-room, and quietly snored in full chorus. The band from on board the man-of-war, played quadrilles and country dances all the evening,—an extraordinary advantage in the West Indies, where the only musicians in the country are negro fiddlers, who play merely a little by the ear: they know neither sharps nor flats, and when such come in their way, they play the natural instead, so that it is very difficult to find out what tune they are playing. The only comfort to those who are easily annoyed by discord is, that the

music is always accompanied by a tamborine and one or two triangles, so that the discordant tones are pretty well drowned. The negro musicians soon become sleepy—and it is generally said, that they play better asleep than awake. All the while they play, whether awake or not, they keep time with the foot, and move their head and body backwards and forwards in a most ludicrous way.

I was very much amused by observing what connoisseurs the negro women are of dress,—standing near me, at one time, I heard them criticise every thing I wore, both in the materials and make.

We returned home about two o'clock in the morning, and our walk was not less delightful than it had been in the evening going up; the air was equally balmy and mild, and not the least chill was perceivable, although we had just left a crowded room. Strange as it may appear, a ball-room is much cooler in the West Indies than in Britain,—where the windows being all shut, and very probably a fire in the

room, the air gets disagreeably close; whereas in the West Indies, the doors and windows being opened all round, and a free circulation of air admitted (for the breeze sets in after sunset), it is seldom or ever uncomfortably warm. Let me say, with reference to the presence of the negroes at the ball; that when a proprietor of negroes thus admits his slaves to participate in the amusements of his family, there can be no interested motives, it must proceed from pure good will, and the wish to see them happy. This subject, however, will be further elucidated when we come to speak of the negroes' holidays and amusements.

The important subject of religion, and especially, the religious instruction of the negroes, will form matter for a future chapter; but at present it is necessary that I should say a single word respecting the religious feelings of the white population. It seemed to me, that religion occupied very little, the attention of the great majority of society; and still there was little opposition to it. With many families,

there was the strictest decorum on this subject, as far as this could be proved by regularly attending church; but in general, they acted as if the Sabbath day ended when the bell tolled for the conclusion of the morning service. During my residence in St. Vincent, there was no evening service.

The morning service began at eleven o'clock, and I always regretted that it was at the hottest time of the day, for walking or riding under a tropical sun was so oppressive, that many were prevented altogether from attending service. Some families, however, and many individuals, besides managers and overseers, rode several miles regularly to church. Had there been evening service, it might have tended greatly to discountenance Sunday dinners, and parties of pleasure in the country, both of which were very common.

I would say generally, however, that satisfied with a certain form of religion and morality, I seldom or ever met with any one who seemed ever to think at all seriously upon the subject

of religion. I rarely saw any one read religious books, nor did there seem any desire to peruse works of this description.

The Sunday market I heard them always talk of as an evil, neither did I ever in my life hear it vindicated in the abstract. To the white population it is a nuisance, and no advantage; but it is far otherwise to the negro and coloured people, who derive many peculiar profits from the market being on Sunday, which they would be deprived of were it held on a week day; and therefore, although so disgraceful a scene, yet it is one of those customs which were it at once abolished, other worse consequences might follow,—which will hereafter be explained. It is sufficient here to say, that I conscientiously believe the white population of the West Indies are by no means advocates for buying and selling unnecessarily upon the Sabbath, but they must be aware, as residents in the colonies, of many difficulties and dangers in making any sudden change, of which those living in England can have no idea. As I

have spoken of markets, I am reminded that some things have escaped me which require to be set down; and that I have not yet sufficiently corrected the absurd notices entertained of the colonists, by those who have either trusted to partial information, or who, during a short visit to the West Indies, have seen but the outside of society. During all the time I remained in St. Vincent, the markets were so bad, and so ill-supplied, that I was eight months in the colony before I ever saw or heard of a bit of fresh beef: the population had then however so considerably increased, that an ox was killed once a week generally, when it was regularly advertised in the newspapers, and was hailed as a most important piece of intelligence. Before that time, if you wished to give even a plain dinner to a friend, you were compelled to send round the country to procure a whole sheep, which you were of course obliged to use; for to keep part of it was impossible, from two causes—the heat of the climate, and the thievishness of your

servants—therefore having a sheep, it became almost as cheap to make a great ceremonious dinner of it, and add the other necessary articles, such as turtle, fowls, or turkey, ham, ducks, and guinea birds. I was nearly two years in the island before I had ever seen dinners of any other description than those of which I have a few pages back given a sketch, and I concluded this was a sure sign of the preference of the colonists for parade, ceremony, and expense. I had not thought of the necessity almost imposed upon them to act nearly in the way they did; but when I saw more and more of the real state of society, I found that they regretted this style of entertaining, which was rendered unavoidable by their being unable to procure a moderate portion of meat at one time.

Fish forms the chief food of all classes of white people; and, varied by a fowl, or pork, is the daily dinner. Irish mess, beef, and pork are used in every family; and the creole soups are also much liked—they are never made altogether with fresh meat; either salt

beef or pork is used to season them; with, at times, salt fish. Puddings and sweet dishes of any kind are little used in families except upon rare occasions, the materials requisite for either puddings or pies being exorbitantly dear; so that the common family dinner of a West India planter is much inferior, both in quantity and quality, to that of people in the very middling ranks of life at home; while the high price of all the real necessaries of life, renders living upon a limited income little better than what would be called misery in England. How many families are there at this moment, whose dinner consists daily of jack-fish,—and either a roasted plantain, or yam, with occasionally as a treat, a bit of salt pork. The jack-fish is indeed an excellent fish, resembling the herring in size, and somewhat in flavour also; but I suspect our lawyers and merchants' families, &c. at home would look upon this as very poor daily living, and would by no means think they made up for it by twice a year giving a great dinner, and eating

fat mutton. Those who have been long settled, and who are accustomed to this style of living, take it very contentedly, and ask their intimate friend "to come and eat fish with them;" but they know this is not the style of living in England, and it is not before a considerable lapse of time that they consider you sufficiently creolized, to invite you to come and eat fish, and when they do, it is a sure sign that they consider you no longer as a ceremonious visitor.

I was, therefore, as I before remarked, nearly two years in the West Indies before all this opened upon me,—I say opened, for it was the cause of unfolding and explaining the motives of many actions, which I had before condemned and misconstrued, considering them as originating in choice rather than in necessity. I now saw my error; not only in this, but being now, as it were, more behind the scenes, I was convinced, that although a casual observer generally will conclude all creoles to be lazy, luxurious, ignorant, proud, and even deficient in feeling—that the cause of his hastily adopt-

ing such sentiments, proceeds first from coming out firmly persuaded that a creole must be all this; and secondly, from seeing only the outside of society; for, mixing as a stranger with the colonists at these sumptuous dinners, he little dreams that a fried jack-fish, or salted fish and plantains, is the colonist's daily fare,—he sees them listless and unemployed during the evening, but he does not know what fatigues they have undergone during the day; and himself newly arrived, with all the advantages of an European constitution, he makes no allowance for the relaxed state of their constitutions, which have suffered during perhaps twenty years, from the effects of a tropical sun.

He sees them speak peremptorily to their servants; and in argument maintain the necessity in the present state of negro civilization, that corporal punishment should not be entirely done away with by law; but the new comer knows nothing, or little or nothing, of the real state of negro civilization; he is totally unaware of the difficulty experienced in managing

negroes; or, if he has just begun to feel it personally, he blames not the negro; but argues with boldness, that the difficulty arises wholly from the bad system of slavery around him; so that, without even emancipation, he is sure that mildness, and just, humane management, will make it quite as easy to manage negroes as white servants, and he therefore is shocked with what he considers the want of true feeling, humanity, and justice in the white population.

There is only one way of coming to a different, and a juster conclusion; and that is, by residing long enough in a West India town with one's own slaves for servants, or in residing at, and taking the active management of a sugar estate,—then indeed, will he find his patience, his humanity, nay, if he be truly pious, he will find his pious principles brought to a severer trial than he was aware of, and he will give no small credit to those proprietors who jog on amidst all their trials and difficulties, saying they hope better times will come: and

as for the negroes, poor creatures, it is not their fault; the only wonder is, exposed as they are to so many representations of the cruelty and oppression of their masters, not to mention the alleged unlawfulness of their proprietor claiming them as property, that they stand by their master at all.

But there is one source of suffering that every resident West Indian has endured for some years, and is still enduring—and it is to be feared, will and must continue to endure,—and that is, a total want of personal security for himself and his family. The planter is often distant many miles from any white person save his manager and overseers: now on a small estate, say where there are one hundred negroes, and allowing that out of that number there are twenty-five young and old, and other twenty-five, in whom their master has some confidence,—I say *some* only, for perfect confidence it is impossible to have, as negroes are such personal cowards, that even if their affection prompted them to protect their master, their

fear would operate so strongly, that though they might warn him of danger, yet they would not defend him against a superiority of numbers,—well, even upon this very moderate calculation, there would be fifty men against the planter, his wife and family, and at the most, other two white men; indeed, I rather think that upon so small an estate there would not be three white residents. But if this is thought a distressing situation, what must be the feelings of a planter's wife? If any serious apprehension of a rising is entertained, her husband and every white man upon the estate are obliged to join the militia, and she is left with her children in a state of alarm beyond description: surrounded on all sides by negroes, she knows that she has no means of escape, and that she and her family are left entirely in their power.

West India houses, open as they are necessarily on all sides to admit the air, cannot be secured in any way to prevent nightly intruders; and I speak from experience, when I say that

I envied the poorest cottager in England, who could fasten his door and windows, and call his little home his castle, while every night in the West Indies, you feel that you cannot secure your house; and one half the night is frequently passed in listening, rising out of bed, and ascertaining whether or not all is quiet.

I am afraid some of those females, whose delicate sensibility has been so much affected by the bare name of West India slavery, would, notwithstanding their amiable belief in the gentle and harmless disposition of the negro, have been not a little nervous, had they found themselves placed on a wild West Indian estate, with a house so open as they all must be, and perhaps watching over a young family, alarmed for the safety of absent husbands; and either surrounded by domestic slaves, in whom they have no rational ground of confidence, or else, as is usual at such times, deserted by their domestic slaves altogether.

Before concluding this imperfect sketch of

the white population, I would offer a few observations upon the condition of the secondary class of whites, with reference chiefly to the demoralizing influence of slavery upon their characters and habits,—facts applicable to all West India colonies. Slavery operates prejudiciously on the higher classes; but its demoralizing effect operates in a different manner, and still more prejudicially, upon the lower orders of white people, who, having seldom or ever any females in their own situation in life to associate with, and to whom they might be respectably married, they get a negro (probably belonging to the estate they are employed upon) to live with them, until they gradually forget their country, and their early instructions, and become as the expression is, almost *a white negro.*

These, I think, are the effects of slavery among those whose business it is to manage slaves. The immoral habits which I had heard described as existing in the best society even in the West Indies, I nowhere found; and I

am inclined to believe that the tone of morals in this respect, among both sexes, is much more really strict than is generally to be found in what is called genteel society in England: besides, it ought to be recollected, that in Britain much concealed immorality may take place, but in most of the colonies this is impossible,—every thing is known, and speedily rumoured abroad.

Managers upon small estates, and overseers, are much to be pitied, for they have not the means to enable them to make any woman decently comfortable; the common necessaries of life are all so expensive, that living costs three or four times as much as it does in England; besides, in the West Indies, you lose a great deal from theft; the negroes plunder by little and little, but still the annual loss is no trifle; neither can a man control his expenditure in that country, as he can do in England, where there are retail shops for every article. In the colonies he must supply himself from merchants' stores, who sell principally whole-

sale. He sends in an order to town for what he wants, and however exorbitant he may think the article, and very likely ill-suited for what he requires, he must take it or go without.

Managers, upon small estates, have seldom a salary that exceeds 180*l.* or 200*l.* sterling per annum. They have a house, unfurnished—two servants, and a boy—they have also of course what rum, sugar, and salt fish they require from the estate. Now this seems, to one who has never been in the West Indies, a very fair situation,—but to those who know the country, and the necessary expenditure, it is quite another thing. A manager must keep up a little of the appearance of a gentleman, otherwise he would not be respected even by the negroes; and though upon 200*l.* sterling per annum, he might live, and keep out of debt, yet he could not possibly do more, owing to the great expense of every article of clothing, and also of housekeeping. Managers so situated, too often keep a coloured housekeeper, who generally manages well for herself, though

she almost always does something for her own subsistence, either by huckstering or making preserves. She can live, and be very comfortable, in circumstances that no European woman could possibly be happy in; for she is never at a loss for society, as she can always find some coloured people not far distant, of her own habits and manners; but an European female in such circumstances, would be desolate and miserable, even if her husband could afford to give her the common comforts of life; for no women of decent moral habits, can make a friend of any of the coloured population who move in that sphere of life.

If the salary of a manager be too limited to admit of his marrying, that of an overseer is still more so, seldom exceeding 50*l.* sterling, so that it is hardly possible for him even to pay his way.

These causes combined, operate powerfully upon the middling and lower classes of white people in preventing marriage, and opening a door to much immorality.

Some may think that the proprietors ought to enlarge the salaries of their managers and overseers, but it is literally impossible for them to do this. West India produce for several years has gradually been decreasing in value, while the expense of every article requisite upon an estate has not at all decreased; and such is the desperate state of their affairs, that upon a small estate, it requires the whole produce to pay the current expenses, and not a farthing remains for the proprietor or his family.

There are few West Indian estates that are altogether out of debt, and some it is to be feared are involved beyond their now real value: this depresses the spirit of any man who is placed in such circumstances; he sees his family unprovided for, and no prospect before him but that of his estate being sold to satisfy the demands of the mortgagees at home. This is no imaginary tale, but a faithful relation of the pitiable state to which so many hard-working and benevolent owners of negroes are reduced principally by those precipitate measures, all of

which, let it be remembered, took their rise from the erroneous opinions and imaginary stories circulated throughout Great Britain. It is a very unjust mode of proceeding, to search out only for instances of immorality or cruelty; the fair way is to examine the state and feelings of the majority, *the great majority*, of the white population. There are, no doubt, cases of immorality and cruelty in perhaps every West India colony; but are there more, or as many in proportion, as in the same population at home? I am convinced that those cases of severity, which may occasionally occur in the West Indies, are not aggravated by the system of slavery; but that in general, slavery operates as a preventive. How often have I heard the proprietor of slaves say, "Well, I would not put up with this from a white servant, but it is but a negro,—he knows no better." This I have heard said frequently, when faults have been committed that would have ruined a servant's character for life at home, or more probably have brought him to justice. It must be

recollected what high privileges are enjoyed by Britons; while our colonists, almost in comparison shut out from the civilized world,—often living at a great distance from church,—with all the disadvantages of a tropical climate to contend with, are to have their every action canvassed, their motives distorted; and that by people who have proved themselves, to say the least, miserably ignorant of the country whose manners and customs they have attempted so fully to describe.

West Indians do not now shrink from investigation on the subject of kindness to their people,—neither need they do so,—from a fair impartial investigation they have nothing to fear; what they justly dread is, that despicable system of espionage which is so boldly carried on and encouraged, by those, too, who ought to know better than to listen to the descriptions of persons who never mixed in decent society in the colonies, and whose observations can only be derived from second hand, and there can be little doubt, often from the lower orders

of coloured people. This is not the place to describe the effect produced upon the negro by the sweeping aspersions laid to the charge of the whole of the white population; but it is now too late to soften the bitter cup of calamity that many an European family has had to drink. More than one proprietor I have seen sink to the grave under his accumulated feelings of disappointment at finding his character so unjustly attacked, and his worldly prospects completely crushed, while his afflicted family were bereaved of a husband and a father, and reduced to work for their own support, early and late, to procure a miserable pittance. There are not a few at this moment in these lamentable circumstances, who were kind benevolent owners of negroes, and whose people, though of course no longer belonging to them, *visit them* and feel for them, *taking provisions frequently from their own grounds to their old Misses.* Negroes are by no means the stupid beings some people suppose them to be: they know very well the estate that is doing well, and the one that is

sinking; and they can trace from cause to effect, more accurately than some may imagine. I recollect a negro coming one day to my door, in April 1828: she had two trays, one upon her head full of plantains, and another on her arm with some fruit. After purchasing some pines, I asked her if the plantains were for sale; she said "no;" and with a tear in her eye, added, "I'm going to carry dem to my old misses, she be very kind to me when I was her nigger; my misses knowed better times, but bad times now misses, bad times—my misses had plenty nigger, and her husband, and fine pic-a-ninnies; but dem bad times come, and so you see dem sell one, two, tree,—I no know how many nigger, till at last massa die. I believe he die of broke heart: so we just go now and den and see misses, and gie her some yam, or some plaintain, or any little ting just to help her."

This negress had no provision-grounds of her own, being a domestic slave, and therefore must have actually purchased, or at least bartered

something of her own to procure the plantains for her old mistress. This is no uncommon case; but in Trinidad I saw more of such, where the distress of the white population was even much greater than in St. Vincent.

CHAPTER III.

SKETCH OF THE COLOURED POPULATION.

Character, habits, and peculiarities — Conduct towards their children—Coloured free servants, and slave domestics—Correction of errors.

The coloured population are partly free, and partly slaves: there is a considerable diversity of rank, not only among those who are free, but also among the slaves. Some of those born free, have received a tolerably good education in Europe, and there are a few individuals who have enjoyed even superior advantages in this respect; but by far the greater number have learnt all they know in the colony. Although some of the male sex are excellent accountants, and write well, the females are in general de-

plorably ignorant, and know little beyond the use of their needle. Many earn their bread in this way; but they are in general so proud and so indolent, that it is hardly possible to get any thing out of their hands, and they charge besides most exorbitantly for every kind of work. Others make preserves and pickles, while some hire themselves out as servants; but they seldom are found to suit in this capacity; they are so tenacious of rank, and quarrel so unnecessarily with the negroes, whom they treat, generally speaking, with so much contempt and disdain, that there is no possibility of pleasing both parties. I had several trials of free coloured servants, but I found them so much above the situation they willingly undertook, that they required other servants to do nearly all their duty for them. They are extremely plausible, and great talkers; and make a point of telling not only all they know, but, what is worse, all they choose to invent; and, to new comers, nothing is so dangerous as to have a free coloured servant much about one, so con-

nectedly, and apparently with so little art or design, do they tell their stories, while all the time they are weaving a net, and trying to catch you in it, or to sow discord between you and your friends. If they are dangerous attendants upon a female, it need not be said, how much more cautious the other sex ought to be of their snares: to allure young men who are newly come to the country, or entice the inexperienced, may be said to be their principal object. The lower classes of the white population, from the causes I formerly referred to, deprived in a great measure of white female society, are easily ensnared by these handsome and attractive young women, and after a time, such society becomes more suited to their taste than that of their countrywomen. Among coloured females, marriage is not very general; but many of them, although not bound by the ties of matrimony, do live otherwise respectably with those who maintain them; bringing up their family, apparently mutually anxious for their welfare, and desirous that their

children should not follow their example. I recollect one instance in particular that occurred in reference to this, while I was in St. Vincent.

A coloured woman, who had lived many years with the same person, and had several children by him, had also one daughter, older, but not by the same father;—she came to me one day in great and unfeigned distress, telling me that she had every reason to believe her daughter was desirous of forming a connexion with a young coloured man, who, she was satisfied, neither would nor could marry her. After detailing to me all the means she had resorted to for discouraging the intimacy, and coercing her daughter, she said, "And now, ma'am, what more can I do? I have brought her up to be clever; she reads and writes nicely; I have had her taught her duty both to God and man, ma'am; she an't as I was (begging your pardon) in my day; we be very ignorant, and know no better; we now know the sin of acting so as she has been brought up to know, and now she only despise me cause I'm more igno-

rant than she be; but for all that, I know marriage is the right way, and I'd rather lay her in the grave as see her go on so."

It is of no consequence to my readers to know the result: the end I had in view was to shew, that instances do at times occur among the coloured population, of parents, although themselves unmarried, yet not by any means regardless as to the future moral habits of their offspring. I am afraid, however, that the majority of such parents have little anxiety upon the subject; and to make a good bargain—that is, a good legal settlement for their daughter—is all they aim at; and if this be properly and legally managed, they consider marriage a matter of little import. That there are some of the white population who contribute to render this immorality common, there cannot be a doubt; but such are neither generally respected, nor do they move in what is called good society. Such connexions cannot be concealed in a colony; besides that, the coloured women always glory in the tie; and gentlemen

who live in this state, are not, as in fashionable society in Britain, frequently the better received for it. I know necessarily much less of the coloured population than of the negro; but I am inclined to think that the rising generation are every way superior to their forefathers: yet it must be conceded, that, as a population, they are peculiarly inclined to immorality; and there is such a total want, generally speaking, of decency in the way they dress, if I except those in the highest ranks, that they always appeared to me very disgusting. They are graceful in their address, and often have an expressive countenance, although very languid. The talents of any I have known have been all very far from being good; but their constitutional indolence is so great, that it may prevent their employing the powers of their mind. They always appeared to me less ambitious of instruction than the negro,—equally violent and proud,—fond of going to law about every trifle, and designing and intriguing about small matters.

The first property they are anxious to possess is a slave, and they certainly keep their slave to his duty under a very different discipline from that practised by white people; and to be sold to a coloured owner, is considered by a negro to be an extreme misfortune: of course there are honourable examples among coloured people of the reverse of all this, for I only speak of the majority. Generally speaking, the coloured women have an insatiable passion for showy dresses and jewels, and are decked out, not only in gorgeous, but in costly articles of this description. The higher class of females dress more showily and far more expensively than European ladies. They wear neither bonnets or caps, but invariably have a Madras handkerchief for a turban; and those who can afford it, wear, when going to chapel, a beaver hat; it is generally grey, and similar to a lady's riding hat in shape. They are also particularly fond of nice silk umbrellas, or parasols, as they are always termed in the West Indies: tight, coloured kid shoes and silk stockings also are favourites.

I have understood that the coloured men are by no means given to intoxication, and I never could observe any thing but sobriety in their appearance; they are said to be very fond of good living, and to indulge a great deal in this way; some of the higher classes are rich, and entertain each other frequently with great splendour and ceremony. Dancing is their chief recreation, and they dance well; they have very frequent public balls, to which many of the white unmarried gentlemen go by invitation; but the ticket is paid for by the visitor. They keep up their dances until day-break, the scene of gaiety being either the hotel or some other public room in the colonial town; the music is of course more than indifferent, consisting of negro fiddlers, a tamborine, and triangles; those who are not engaged in the dance, beat time with their feet and hands; so that whenever there is a coloured dance, the noise made in this way is heard to a considerable distance.

The language of the coloured people is much

more intelligible than that of negroes, although the lower class speak nearly negro dialect; but the higher classes often express themselves much better, although generally very ungrammatically; and all of them have that strong nasal pronunciation and creole drawl, which is peculiarly disagreeable in the colonies: indeed many of the white population are by no means free from this drawl, and white creole children have it almost as strong as a negro.

How far the coloured population are informed upon the subject of religion, I had no personal means of ascertaining; the higher classes attend divine service very regularly on Sunday twice a day, and many of them attend the week-day service also. The majority attend at the Methodist chapel, and many of them are members of the Wesleyan Methodist society: they are I think particularly attentive, whether in church or chapel; and though the wish to display a fine dress is the cause no doubt of the attendance of many, yet the regularity and earnestness with which some of them apparently

listen, speak much in their favour. How far the truths of the Gospel are believed by them, so as to have a practical influence upon their lives, I know not, excepting from general report; but I have heard some such mentioned as very respectable characters. They contribute liberally to the society for the support of the Wesleyan Methodist missionaries. I have always found the coloured population extremely civil and polite; but my experience with regard to this class of society, has been very limited, and there are various opinions upon this subject, and of course those who have lived longest among them must know them the best. If I am to judge from their singing, they seem to possess a much more accurate ear for music than most white creoles do: though they often sing in bad taste, yet their tones are accurately nice, as is their time; but I never could discover any thing like true taste or feeling in their singing.

The superior classes of coloured females seldom do much for their own support personally,

but they frequently purchase dry goods wholesale from the captains of ships or merchants in town, and retail them afterwards at a considerable per-centage. Ribbons, silks, laces, and gauzes, are generally to be had from some one or other of them. The other sex are employed in various ways: some keep retail shops for dry goods of all descriptions, and others retail spirits and sell grog. Several are employed as clerks, either in merchants' stores, or as copying clerks to lawyers, &c.; while others are tradesmen.

The lower classes of coloured people are, I think, very vacillating in their character;—sometimes they do a little work of any kind at home,—then they get tired of this, and hire themselves out as servants. The wages they receive are never less, and often more, than one joe per month; that is, a Spanish Johannes, worth 3*l.* 6*s.* currency, varying in sterling value according to the exchange; but during the time I was in the West Indies, varying from 1*l.* 7*s.* or 8*s.* sterling, upwards. The master

who hires the servant, either finds him or her in board, or gives a weekly allowance in money, which is never less than half, and never more than one dollar, the value of which is about 4*s.* or 4*s.* 3*d.* sterling, also of course varying according to the rate of exchange; but there is always something left for the servants at meal time, in a country where victuals cannot be kept; especially in the hot season, when I have seen poultry killed early of a morning, unfit for use at six the same evening. This, therefore, appears at first sight, a very good situation; but it is like many other things which seem extremely fair sketched upon paper, but which in practice, are found very different.

The coloured *slave* domestic is ten to one richer, and more comfortable, than the *free* one; and I never conversed with a free coloured domestic who did not admit this. The free coloured domestic has 3*l.* 6*s.* currency, per month; and say, at an average, three quarters of a dollar for his weekly allowance: out of this he must provide a little food for himself,

clothing (a very expensive article for coloured free servants, who all dress well), &c. There are few who sleep in their master's house: this is a matter of convenience on their own part; but it is customary for them to have a small house of their own, so they have house rent to pay, and the small et ceteras which the possession of a house entails. They must furnish their own soap for washing,—their own candle when they go home at night;—if sick, the whole incidental expenses have to be paid by them; and if laid aside altogether, they are miserably off, and are completely dependent upon the kindness of their former masters, or other coloured friends who may be in a superior situation in life; for they have so many demands for their money, and are generally also of such improvident habits, that this class of coloured people, when out of employment or in sickness, are greatly to be pitied; and if they have a family, which is very common, their situation is truly wretched, for they have nothing to trust to,—no master, of whom they

can demand all the necessaries of life, should they be sick, or unable, from old age, to work any longer.

How different is this from the coloured domestic slave: he has the same money weekly for his allowance,—the same privileges from his master's table; he is furnished with an annual supply of linen, jean, and nankeen trowsers, that would rather astound our good English housewives; his clothes are washed, smoothed, and mended for him, without one thought or anxiety on his part; he has every comfort in sickness,—medical advice, and all incidental expenses provided, and, if required, a sick nurse in attendance. Should he have a family, no child he has is any burden to him; indeed, if his wife belong to the same master, his children increase his comforts; their allowances commence from the day of their birth, and it is some years before they can consume all he receives for them. No accident, disabling him from work, deprives him of a home, food, clothing, or any necessary comfort, and

he looks forward to old age without anxiety, or the chilling dread of poverty, for himself or his family.

Coloured slaves are employed in various ways; many are tradesmen, some domestics, while others are hired out by the overseers, either as servants, or for carrying goods about the country for sale. Few are employed in the field, as many of them consider it too mean an employment, though I have met with instances of coloured men who had been domestics, and left their places, to work in the fields from their own choice. They are generally rather more polished than the negro; but I think they are, if possible, more artful; and certainly remember and revenge an affront very differently from what any negro would do,—that is, singly, for I do not allude here to the conduct of negroes when combined. Coloured slaves can be pretty good servants when they incline; but it is rarely they do incline, being so tenacious of their rank, that they must always have a negro about them to assist them in whatever

they are doing. Their habits are very expensive, for they know nothing of the real value of money; indeed this is a necessary consequence of the present state of all the slaves, for, being so abundantly supplied by their masters with lodging, food, clothing, medical expenses,—and, if females, their children being rather an assistance than a burden to them,—they have only to think of providing themselves with the luxuries and superfluities of life. I have known a coloured domestic female slave, who would not demean herself by wearing anything so vulgar, and, as she expressed it, "unlike a lady," as cotton stockings, and she regularly walked out with white silk ones. I have seen a coloured slave in Trinidad working in the field, with the finest white jean trowsers, nice linen shirt, watch, chain, seals, and last, though not least, *Wellington boots!* They always address each other with much ceremony, never using the Christian name without putting Miss, or Sir, before it. This is universal among coloured slaves; and even the white population,

in speaking of a coloured female slave, always call her Miss. To omit these forms, would appear to them a downright insult, and few things would displease them so much as to forget addressing them in this way. I think the higher classes of negro slaves superior to them in mental energy, less prone to revenge, and quite as much civilized in their manners; but the majority of common field negroes are inferior to coloured slaves in those respects.

Deep laid schemes of individual revenge seem to be characteristic of the lower classes of the coloured population; and to obtain the truth from them is difficult beyond measure, since they, as well as negroes, will swear to anything: they will tell you a story wherein it often happens that every second sentence contradicts the preceding; and the ending is sure to be, "Massa, I am sure I speak all every word true, I'll kiss the book and swear to it." I always remarked, that where there were the greatest number of falsehoods, they were the most vehemently desirous to kiss the book:

their disregard of an oath is most shocking; to speak the truth seems to them almost impossible, and they often invent so cunningly, that it is difficult to prove the falsehood of that which all the while you feel convinced is a tissue of lies. Were I asked what had shocked me most, of all the immoralities among the slave, free coloured, and negro population of the colonies I visited, I should answer, without hesitation—perjury; and, what is worse, it is a sin that they are becoming more and more addicted to, and which the advice they receive from the mother country tends to strengthen them in, for they are told that no white person speaks truth; and it is to be lamented, that these dangerous sentiments are taking strong and fatal root among them. How far such sentiments can be reconciled with the multiplicity of oaths which every manager of an estate must take four times a year in Trinidad, according to the new system, I cannot conceive; for it is distinctly stated, in Parliamentary speeches, that nothing coming from a

transatlantic colony ought to be believed: how, then, can the same party urge the system of taking oaths, upon every occasion, as to circumstances the slightest imaginable? so that a watch or clock being too quick or too slow, might enable a negro to bring forward an instance of perjury in his master or the manager. This has, in fact, driven more than one upright honest man from Trinidad, who felt that no accuracy of his could protect him from a charge of perjury upon one score or other.

Many of the free, and not a few of the coloured slave domestics, of both sexes, have been in England. I have conversed with several of them,—but they all disliked it, and uniformly upon the same grounds; let the detail of one conversation serve as a specimen.

E. had been long a female coloured slave, occupied principally about the children of the family to which she belonged. She was, what may be termed, a very superior servant; she was uniformly extremely well dressed, always wearing stockings and shoes, with many ex-

pensive ornaments, and nice Madras handkerchiefs for her turbans. She had gone home with her master's family, and resided some time with them in England; though not at all clever, she was polite in her manners, and had no want of common sense. She had permission from the attorney to work out for herself, therefore she paid him a certain sum, and he furnished her with all she required. Her employment was working with the needle. I asked her how she liked England. "Not very well, Misses." "No, what did you dislike there?" "Misses, England be very fine country to be sure; every thing to be had there: fine shop, and all dat: but, Misses, England very bad country for poor servant: Misses, it feared me to see how the servant work there, and they no thought nothing of neither; Misses, they work so hard: up early, Misses, they no stop work sometime past midnight, and then their Massas and Misses take no thought of them when they be old; they no give them house to live in, Misses. I'd think it very hard

if I worked for my Massa all the time I'm able, and then when I get old he no give me house, nor nothing. Misses, a slave here be much more thought of than poor English servant." I told her it was very true; but that, in consideration for the loss of some of these advantages, some thought it a sufficient equivalent to be free, and no longer a slave. "Well, but, Misses," added she, "what signify *free*, if we *starve!*" That many of the coloured slave population see the superior worldly comforts they enjoy, compared with their white brethren in free service in Great Britain, I have had abundant evidence.

I have often asked coloured domestic slaves if they would like to go to England? "Yes, Misses," answered one of them to whom I asked the question; "I'd like to go if you bring me back, but I no like to top dey."—"Why not?" "Misses, England no good country for servant, they voreck hard too much."—"How do you know that?"—Cause, Misses, many that have been, dey tell me they no like it for the voreck

being so hard, and then it be so cold."—"But if you work actively it prevents your feeling cold."—"But, Misses, dey voreck, dey tell me, in England constant,—they no sit down softly at sun down, as we do,—but work, work, after night (during the evening), Misses: I could not bear that."—"But then, if you went to England you would be free."—"Well, Misses, suppose I was free, I could not have a better Misses than I have; and she good too much to me when I'm sick, and that is what they tell me white Misses at home take no account of."

I told E. that servants at home certainly did work very much harder than in the West Indies, and were often neglected in sickness and old age, although many who behaved well were not forgotten by their former master and mistress if they required help, or were in distress. "But," added she, "Misses, they tell me the Massa may just gie them some little ting, or no, just as it pleasures him; they cannot ask for it like me; so indeed, Misses, I think we be the best off."

They always speak of English servants as very mean, and having no money; and I never met with one among the numerous coloured slaves whom I had opportunities of talking to, who was at all fond of the idea of free domestic servitude in England.

Those coloured children, who are the illegitimate offspring of white men, are, with few exceptions, free: when they are not so, the father is most justly detested, and held up as a character anything but respectable: I never could hear but of two instances of this. Where such cases occur, the children are, with hardly any exception, freed as soon as born; and there is attention, more or less, bestowed upon their education. Some send them to Europe for that purpose; but this I consider a very injudicious plan, unless they can be so provided for, or put in the way of providing for themselves, as to render them independent at home; for, if they receive an European education, it totally unfits them for the scenes they must return to: no coloured person, who has received a decent education at home, could feel happy in the

society of the coloured population of a West India colony, who are, as a body, very ignorant; and it is from observing some cases of this kind, that I have been convinced, that the best education to be obtained without sending them out of the West Indies, is much more conducive to their real happiness. Barbadoes possesses excellent schools; and in Trinidad, education is now conducted upon so very superior a system, that there are many elegant and accomplished white females resident there, who would do honour to any European society from their accomplishments, and who yet have never been out of the island; and though undoubtedly the very best masters are expensive; yet taking all together, these would be found far less costly than sending a child across the Atlantic, where every habit and acquisition will infallibly tend to unfit him for what must be his or her future lot. There are, indeed, excellent schools and private masters in Trinidad, where coloured children might receive as great, and much more prudent advantages of education, than can be bestowed upon them in Europe. In general,

however, coloured illegitimate children of white men are not neglected in point of education, and the more common error is overdoing it, by placing them for a certain number of years in society, the whole tone of which is so superior to that which they must return to.

The relationship to all the branches of a white family, although illegal, is kept up upon both sides; and there is much kindly feeling maintained by both parties: all their private domestic affairs are entered into with interest, and there is a more universal feeling of this kind between the legitimate and illegitimate relations of a family, than is usually to be found in Britain. Such children are not in the West Indies received upon a footing of equality; but with hardly an exception, they are affectionately attended to, and the illegitimate party frequently visits his father's even distant relations. I never heard a creole, who could speak with patience of a man who could retain his child as a slave,—they always used to deplore it, as unfeeling and unnatural; but I am convinced,

having made most minute inquiry upon such subjects, that these cases are very rare indeed, not occurring near so frequently as they do at home, in a form quite as objectionable, though not perhaps so revolting, because the word *slave* is unattached to it. I candidly allow that the illegitimate children of white men have been retained in a state of slavery; but I also state the truth when I say, that such things are extremely rare; so rare, that after diligent inquiry, I could only hear of three cases in five years and a half, and are quite as much detested by transatlantic settlers, as by the residents of free-born Britain: but I also must say, that I do believe that in the eye of God, he who retains his child in a state of slavery, while that child is (to my certain knowledge) amply furnished with every necessary of life, is infinitely less really culpable than he who in enlightened Britain abandons his offspring to a scanty pittance, to be trained perhaps in vice, and never even knowing to whom he owes his being.

CHAPTER IV.

SKETCH OF THE NEGRO POPULATION.

Overworking negroes—Different classes—The field negro—The culture of the sugar cane, and negro labour in the cultivation—Sugar and rum making —Various uses of the cane—Negro domestics—Head servants—A West India kitchen—Nurses, grooms, and washerwomen—Tradespeople.

It will be necessary, before attempting any description of the character and customs of the negro population, whether free or slave, that we take a slight view of their employments.

This appears to me the more necessary, as it has been generally in Britain believed that negroes are hard worked in the West Indies; and the common opinion is, that they labour

more than the working population of this country. If there be one sentiment respecting the colonies more erroneous than another, it is this; for although I arrived in the West Indies fully convinced that I should find, and indeed almost determined to find, every slave groaning under oppression, yet I was not one month in St. Vincent, before I was compelled from my own experience of negro character, to be somewhat sceptical, whether *it were possible to overwork a negro*,—and I now feel no doubt upon the subject: the fact is, they are so perfectly aware that you must give them all the necessaries of life, that if they determine not to work, or at least to do little, how are you to proceed in order to make them do more? for even if punishment, corporal punishment, were resorted to, it is not dreaded by them half so much as work. Employment is their abhorrence—idleness their delight; and it is from having so minutely watched their dispositions, habits, and method of work, that I have come to this conclusion,—that *to overwork a negro slave is impossible.*

This I consider by far the greatest evil of slavery for all parties, and the best argument to be found for general emancipation, as in time, perhaps, necessity might operate in some cases to produce diligence.

By far the greater number of the slave population are occupied in the culture of the cane; and as I have heard such false, not to say ludicrous, descriptions of the labour necessary for its cultivation, and of its manufacture into sugar, the best way is first to give a short description of the general state of agriculture I saw pursued in the West Indies.

Some people who understand those subjects may think this unnecessary; but as I did once peruse some public speech, wherein the orator, in adverting to melasses, said, that he supposed his hearers were all aware that melasses was the juice of the cane when first expressed, it may not perhaps be amiss to inform my readers, that melasses is the drainings of the sugar after it is put in the hogshead:—now it would be well, if the mistakes generally made upon West

Indian affairs were all of this nature; but the fact is, that upon subjects of the greatest moment, equal ignorance is constantly displayed.

But to resume. I shall now describe the usual negro work, beginning with that in which the great majority of the negroes are engaged, viz. the culture of the sugar cane.

Early in November the land is prepared for holing: the holes are about fifteen inches deep, and from three to four feet square, lined regularly off; they are as exact as the squares of a backgammon-board—this is the hardest work upon the estate; and an allowance of rum and water is distributed to each in the field so occupied. I have often watched the negroes at this work for a length of time, and though it is the hardest work that is required in the culture of the cane, it is literally nothing, when compared with many of the necessary operations in the agriculture of Great Britain; such as ploughing, reaping corn, or mowing hay. The weight of the hoes used in this labour are by no means unwieldy, or heavy for a grown man or woman;

and none else are employed in this work. A great deal has been said about the plough not being used in this branch of the West Indian agriculture, but in many of the West India colonies, the ground is so steep and rocky, as totally to preclude the possibility of such an attempt: beside, it never could do the business neatly; and the difficulty of having white servants to plough, renders it a great obstacle even in those few colonies where the land is level: it was attempted upon one estate in the neighbourhood of Kingstown, but no success attended it; and after the piece was ploughed, it was found absolutely necessary to send the negroes in to hole it, before the plants could be put in. In St. Vincent, it is impossible for any one who has had a previous eye for country affairs, not to admire this part of the agriculture: it is done so neatly, and so regularly, that I have seen a field dressed there that looked at a short distance as nice as the preparation for turnip husbandry in Britain.

The work of holing is slowly performed, and

a band of Scotch potatoe hoers would not gain one meal a day, were they to proceed in the same leisurely manner; you see the negroes often two and three at a time standing for many minutes looking about them, and never raising their hoe. When so engaged, they are usually cheerful, telling laughable stories to each other, and singing songs, or rather choruses. I never once heard any of them complain of the work as too hard; but I have heard very many of them express themselves pleased when it was about to commence, because they had their additional rum and water. There is a person regularly appointed to carry water to the field, the whole year through, whatever they are engaged in; always three times; and if the weather be particularly hot, it is carried five times a day. When rum is not given, Mandungo sugar or melasses is used; indeed the women seem at all times to prefer sugar and water. This is universal.

Planting canes generally commences in the end of November, or beginning of December;

from three to four plants are put in each square. The plant consists of the upper joints of the cane, which contain no saccharine juices, from eight to nine inches long, with generally five to six eyes, from which the shoots sprout. This is very light work, and they make it more so, by trifling over it in such a way, that this at once strikes the eye of a stranger,—premising that stranger to have been in the habit of watching farming operations in Great Britain.

Weeding the young canes succeeds planting; it is begun when the cane is about twenty inches in height: this is very easy work, and is performed by the children from eight years and upwards; they have each hoes, proportioned to their strength. Children are uniformly preferred for this work, because their feet being small, they do not tread down the young plants as a grown person would do.

Stripping canes is the next operation: every joint of the cane as it grows, throws out two very long leaves, with serrated edges. From the powerful sun of that country, these leaves

soon drop, wither, and become dry as straw. They are therefore stript off the cane, to expose it to the full effect of the sun's rays, in order to ripen it sufficiently, otherwise it would be unfit for the after progress of sugar making. These dried leaves are called trash, and are laid along the ground, to prevent the sun's influence on the earth, that every moisture possible may be retained for the nourishment of the plant. Part of the trash is used for foddering the cattle, and it is always used for thatching houses, and suits equally well as straw. Stripping is light but disagreeable work; for though the serrated edges have become too dry to cut the fingers, they are then brittle, and fly about like thistle-down. They are stript once, or many times, according as the season proves wet or dry.

Cutting canes in general commences in January, at least any thing cut before that time is merely a small cutting, to obtain plants, or make a few hogsheads before Christmas.

During crop time (that is, harvest) the negroes

are employed in the manufacture of sugar, and the general agriculture of the estate.

The negroes enjoy crop-time, and look forward to it with pleasure: much merriment then goes on amongst them; and I never heard or saw more mirth in a British harvest field, than I have often witnessed in a cane piece. Negroes have fertile imaginations; and it is not unusual for them to compose impromptu, words to their songs, very often of the most ludicrous nature: one sings it over once, and the rest join in chorus. Old stories too, generally of a cheerful cast, are also employed by them to beguile the time, exactly in the same way as is customary in a Scotch harvest field: they may eat as much of the cane as they like; and it always struck me as something out of the way, if I met a negro during crop-time on the estate, not sucking a cane. They cut off a joint or two, while at work with their bill, and suck it; it is particularly wholesome, nutritious, and agreeable when one is thirsty, for its juice is even during the heat of the day delightfully cool. It is

hardly to be credited the quantity of cane that is daily consumed in this way during crop-time—this however is not only permitted, but encouraged, so long as they do not steal the canes; but this they universally do, for two purposes, feeding their hogs, and selling to huckster women, who buy the juice from them at the rate of about fourpence a bottle sterling. These hucksters boil the juice into syrup and clarify it, when it is sold for about one shilling and a penny sterling per bottle. The consequence is that all slaves, but more especially those in the vicinity of the towns, live a great deal annually upon plunder; but this is overlooked by the proprietors: were negroes so harshly treated as is generally supposed, they would not be suffered to act in this manner without being punished for it.

Manuring the ground is most generally done when the cane is about twenty inches high, after the first weeding. Pens for the stock, well laid with trash, are put up in different parts of the estate, so that the manure may

never be far distant from any part of the estate which requires it. It is carried by mules or carts; or if two steep for these, by the negroes, from the pens, in light wicker baskets. These they carry on their heads; in fact a negro carries every thing on his head; and be what it may, poises it with surprising nicety: give a little child a tea-cup to carry, and it is always hoisted on his head; and he will trip off with as much unconcern as if he had nothing on it, while his arms are swung on each side like two pendulums. I have often asked them why they always carried every thing on their head, and they uniformly answered, "what's on the head we no feel, what on a hand hurt da shoulder."

Their carrying manure in this way appears disagreeable work; but they laugh at the stranger who supposes it to be so to the negro, because it would be so to him; the truth is, in so far as cleanliness is concerned, the negro is perfectly indifferent; these sort of things do not affect their personal comfort, because their

whole habits and manners of life are different from Britons: what are comforts and pleasures to them, would not be so to us; and what we esteem as the comforts and luxuries of life, they would neither thank you for nor make use of.

The mills are either worked by water, wind, or by mules; they have all a spindle, with side rollers, all of which are armed with teeth, so that the one works into the other. The turning of the spindle occasions the revolution of the two side rollers, all of which are covered with an iron case; the diameter from eighteen to twenty inches, the length from thirty to thirty-six. These are the most general style of mills; but some are to be found erected upon a newer invention, which are considered as a saving of labour and water.

The first operation after cutting, is passing the cane twice through the rollers; the juice then drops into the mill-bed, which is covered with sheet lead; from that being on an inclined plane, it runs off quickly into a receiver, which contains from 300 to 500 gallons. When that

receiver is filled, it is drawn off, and conveyed by a spout from the mill to the boiling-house, which is always built at some little distance from the mill, in order to prevent a communication in case of fire; it is then received either into a clarifier, if that vessel be used upon the estate; or, if not, into the grand copper. When a portion of the carbonate of lime (the best is made from the cuttings of marble, and is known by the name of Bristol temper lime) is added in different proportions from one to twelve ounces, in the grand copper, according to the age, ripeness, and luxuriance of the canes, some being so ripe and old as to require little or no temper lime. These coppers or boilers are in number from five to six; the largest, which is farthest from the fire, may hold from 300 to 500 gallons; they decrease in size as they approach the fire-place, until the smallest of them, which is called the teach, decreases to 70 or 80 gallons. By the time the juice has been boiled down from the grand copper containing 500 gallons, to the teach over the fire containing 70 or 80

gallons, the sugar then nearly approaches to granulation. The time that this process occupies depends entirely on the state of the weather; for when the weather is dry, and the canes ripe, a strike of sugar (which is the contents of the smallest copper) may be taken off in three quarters of an hour or an hour; but should the weather be showery, the fuel is damp, and there is what is technically termed a spring in the canes, which produces such watery juices, that more boiling is necessary to evaporate those watery particles before granulation takes place: this destroys the quality of the sugar, from having been so long on the fire. The head boiler-man is at the teach, and is a person of no small consequence, as he is responsible for the cleanliness of the boiling-house: at each of the other coppers there is a negro to assist, who are also responsible to him. When the head boiler-man thinks it probable that the liquor is nearly approaching to granulation, he puts in a copper skimmer, and turning it two or three times in the air, he knows by

the consistency of the drop, whether the liquor is likely to granulate sufficiently; or if too much so, he adds some portion of the liquor in the second teach to reduce it. As soon as he finds it in a proper state to strike, that is, to send it by means of a spout from the teach to the wooden cooler, he then performs this operation. There are always from two to three wooden coolers, each being able to contain from five to six strikes, that is, a hogshead of sugar, generally averaging at the king's beam about fifteen cwt. According to the size of the estate, there is made from one to three hogsheads per day; but if there are two sets of coppers, it will produce nearly double that quantity.

The sugar collected in the different boilings throughout the day, is next morning put in the hogsheads, as nearly as can be guessed, at a certain temperature; this requires some nicety, for if it be put too hot into the hogshead, the melasses carry off a great part of the sugar through the curing holes of the hogshead into the cistern made to receive the melasses. If

on the contrary, it be put into the hogshead too cold, it retains the melasses, and this of course spoils the sugar.

After being put into the hogshead, it remains from twelve to fifteen days in the curing-house, to afford time for the melasses to drain thoroughly from it; it is next rammed down with heavy rammers or mallets, until the hogshead is perfectly filled; and it is then headed up by the cooper, marked with the name of the estate and number of hogshead and weight, and carted to be shipped for Great Britain.

I have already mentioned that the dry leaves of the cane were stripped off several times, and used for the various purposes of foddering cattle, thatching negro houses, and occasionally for fuel, &c. The green upper leaves of the cane, which remain on the plant until it is ripe, are cut and carried home for the use of the stock. They are cut by a machine called a top-cutter, into very small fine pieces, and the mangers are then filled with it; a certain proportion of the skimmings from the sugar, or

of melasses, with plenty of water and a few handfuls of salt, are added; and however hard the work may be, the stock improves and fattens upon this food. Megass is the rind and substance of the cane, after it has been passed through the mill; it is made up into small bundles, and carried to a house called the megass-house, a building from fifty to one hundred feet long, and from fifteen to twenty broad, where it is regularly and neatly packed, until the house can hold no more. A few days after the house has been filled, the megass goes through the process of fermentation: in the course of a month this entirely ceases, and it becomes quite dry, light, and soft, and is considered the best fuel possible for the boiling of sugar.

After it has been consumed as fuel, the ashes are considered of great value as a manure, (having been converted into pot-ass), and being mixed with other manure, they form one of the very best composts, so that the cane is a peculiarly valuable plant; every part of it being of use either in one way or another.

The next process is the distillation of rum, which is made in casks usually containing 300 gallons, about the proportion of seventeen pails of water, each pail containing five gallons; 25 gallons of melasses, 20 of the skimmings of sugar; and when the fermentation takes place, the remaining space is filled up with water. These proportions are, however, slightly varied, according to the richness of the melasses. It remains fermenting from eight to ten days, according to the heat of the still-house loft, which ought to be at the temperature of from 70 to 86 degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer. When the head distiller sees that the fermentation has subsided, which is called the falling of the liquor, it is then drawn off and distilled.

I consider this to be a tolerably accurate sketch of the regular work upon a sugar estate: there are other minor jobs also occasionally to be attended to out of crop-time; such as cutting wood, trimming fences, and keeping up the general cultivation of the estate, until crop again commences.

Slaves who are not employed in agriculture,

are either occupied as domestics or as tradesmen.

Nothing surprises an European, on his first arrival in the West Indies, so much as the manners and customs of negro servants.

There is in every gentleman's family, a man who styles himself Mr. ——'s head servant; his duty is merely to see that the boys under him clean the plate, knives and forks, wash the dinner, breakfast, and tea-service, &c. He sees them lay the cloth and arrange the table for the different meals of the family; and he stands in the room during dinner, with the air of an emperor, pointing occasionally to the boys what to do, and bestowing abundance of scolding upon them; nor will the repeated entreaties of his master or mistress, to have done teazing the others, and do his own duty, have any effect: scolding he considers his peculiar privilege, and forego this privilege he will not. He at times removes a dish or plate, and places it in the hand of one of the boys; but, in general, he is a mere cipher, as far as use is concerned,

and yet, were the boys left without him, you could not get on at all. I attempted this; but such a scene of confusion and anarchy ensued, that I found, from experience, that bad as despotism may be, it is a far less evil than a republic. This head man, or rather gentleman —for he would be highly incensed were he treated without the utmost deference to his rank, is also employed in some families to go to market,—an occupation which he likes; for he makes no small profit by it in various ways, which, however, it is not our business at present to treat of. This is the whole work of a head servant; however, I can assure my readers, that he does groan, nevertheless, under the oppression of so much exertion; and that nothing short of twelve hours' sleep, and twelve hours' lounging in the twenty-four, will ever make him contented. Some have coloured men as head servants; but whether negro, coloured, slave, or free, there is not a perceptible shade of difference in the duty that is performed by them.

The cook is frequently a male, and is also a

person of consequence; he has, if the family be large, either a boy or a woman to assist him; he cooks only soups, meat, fish, and vegetables, nor would he submit to the hardship of baking bread, or making pastry, or puddings. The wood used in cookery is cut, and put down for him, and all the water provided; and it is rarely that he will wash or scour the pans, or kitchen utensils,—some younger boy or girl being employed for that purpose.

A West India kitchen is so different from an English one, that some description of it may be necessary, to make those who have not seen one comprehend how much less a cook is exposed to the influence of the fire, than in an English one. The floor is either earth, brick, or stone; there are numerous windows, not glazed, but with wooden shutters to fasten down at night, with probably jalousies to exclude the sun and rain—in this way the air is necessarily freely admitted; the chimney is extremely wide, and there is most frequently no grate, but merely a piece of brick-work,

about four feet long, and three feet broad, upon which the wood is placed; and they make more or less fire, according to the dinner they have to cook. The face is in this way not exposed to the blaze of the fire nearly so much as in an English kitchen. There is an oven in every kitchen, upon the same principle as a baker's oven;—the wood being put in and burnt down, so that when it is fully heated, it is swept out before the bread or meat is put in. There is no roasting-jack: many gentlemen have attempted to get the negroes to use a jack, but in vain; they must have their own way of it, which is simply accomplished by placing two strong logs of wood on each side the fire, and a strong nail in each log to support the spit, which they employ some of their assistants to turn,—and in this way they send up meat tolerably well roasted; but the oven is often also employed for that purpose. This is, I think, considered the whole duty of a cook, whether male or female.

In many families, a head female servant is employed, to assist the lady in dressing,

work with the needle, or bake pastry, make puddings, &c. These are dishes which make their appearance rarely; and a waiting maid considers she does very well if she assists her mistress in dressing, and does about as much work with her needle in one day, as her mistress in one hour,—she has generally a young girl under her, who attends to the bed-chamber, and this is never thoroughly done; yet this is all that is required of them, and indeed it is all they will do. The other servants are employed in cleaning the house; and their number, and particular employments, are wholly dependent upon the family to which they belong; for, of course, where the family is large, there must be an increase of servants.

The office of a groom ought, one would imagine, to be precisely the same as in England, but that the negro groom makes it a very different office, is no less true. In fact, no horse is brushed or curried, far less, properly fed, unless the master stands by and sees it done: the oats sell well in the market; and,

besides, the groom can feed his own poultry with the oats; and it need not be said, that he prefers fattening his own fowls to feeding his master's horse.

The domestics who officiate as washerwomen, have nothing else to do. Perhaps the best way of making my readers comprehend the mode in which they perform this work, is to refer them to the notice of this subject at the commencement of the volume. With respect to the time which they require for the performance of their labour, I have had trials of many different washerwomen—some slaves and some free—but I never found that fourteen dozen of clothes, such as are commonly used in a family, could be washed and got up from Monday morning to Saturday evening by less than three able-bodied women. They never used less, but generally more, than twice the quantity of soap, blue, and starch, required by washerwomen at home; and of all your troublesome establishment, the washerwomen are the most discontented, unmanageable, and idle. It is

altogether out of the question ever to look for all the articles coming back that went out; and the destruction of clothes and linens, in consequence of their carelessness, is past belief. I have myself in one twelvemonth had six dozen of chamber towels, a bed-quilt, two pairs of sheets, stockings without number, pocket handkerchiefs and petticoats to a considerable amount, lost, or more probably stolen, in this way;—for I knew perfectly, that they were appropriated to their own use, as I not unfrequently detected the articles in their possession after they thought a sufficient length of time had elapsed for me to forget the loss of them. Every thing, as I have said, is ill washed in the West Indies; they smooth down frills and flounces along with the gown, making every article of a lady's dress as stiff as buckram. They insist, whether you will or not, upon rubbing the smoothing iron over with candle-grease, to make it pass, as they say, easily over the linen; and when I absolutely refused giving candle for this purpose, they stole it themselves, and used it in spite of me.

There are some superior free coloured women who will condescend to get up clear muslins; but the most that can be said is, that they do it better than the negroes, though far from well, and at an exorbitant rate, asking 2*s.* 6*d.* sterling for one dress,—so that it is needless to say they are rarely employed.

With respect to the number of domestics required in a family,—that necessarily depends upon the number of the family, the style in which they live, and the home they reside in; but a moderate family, who would live genteelly and comfortably in an English city with three maid servants and one man, and the washing put out, would require at least ten grown up servants, and from five to six young people, from ten to seventeen or eighteen years of age; and after all, the house, and general work, would be very indifferently done. This I consider a very fair average; but if the family exceeded five or six, such an establishment would be found insufficient.

These I think are now all the different employments of domestic slaves, excepting those

who have the care of children: in such a case the mother is uniformly head nurse; for all West India ladies are patterns in this respect; their solicitude and personal activity in attending to their young children, being beyond praise. Therefore a nurse has little work, comparatively with the duties attached to that office in Britain. Her nights are undisturbed, and no responsibility is attached to her; and it is very rarely that she either dresses or washes the baby. Nurses consider themselves quite ladies, and would not so far forget their dignity as to wash their own clothes, brush out a room, or indeed do anything but carry young miss or master.

But there are many slaves whose master possesses no landed property, and who are nevertheless employed as field negroes: many respectable families are wholly dependent upon the annual hire of a gang of slaves; while others possess a number of tradesmen, whose hire is of course much more than that of a field negro. Others have many slave domestics,

whom they hire out; — the work of those slaves is the same as if employed by their own master.

As to tradesmen, they are coopers, carpenters, masons, &c.; and the value of good domestics and tradesmen is considerably above that of the common field negro; but the head negroes upon estates, such as drivers and boiler-men, rank with the tradesmen. Some slaves, both coloured and negro, are employed in selling dry goods for their master, or are hired out to do so for others; they are generally clever, valuable people who are so employed; and this sort of wandering life is relished by them; but in the majority of cases they give an inaccurate account of the money received; although I have known some wonderfully correct in this particular, who scrupled not to steal at any other opportunity.

Negroes who have lived much with coloured creoles, acquire a servile manner that is very disagreeable; and most of those who are employed in huckstering goods, either are hired

to, or belong to those people who are greatly less indulgent to their slaves. Having given this short sketch of the general employment of slaves, I shall proceed to some description of their style of life as regards food, clothing, and lodging; and as most erroneous ideas are entertained upon these subjects, it will be necessary to go into the whole detail of particulars; and I can only assure my readers, that I shall state nothing which I did not for years daily witness, and which, were they to visit the colonies, as I have, and take the same trouble of personal investigation, they would find to be the unexaggerated truth.

CHAPTER V.

THE NEGRO POPULATION.

Negro ideas of comfort—Houses and furniture—Cooking—Gardens—Correction of prevailing errors.

ESTATES negroes being the most numerous, I shall begin with their style of life as regards lodging, food, clothing, and comforts during sickness and old age. The negro houses of an estate are placed altogether, resembling a village of huts. An author whom I once read upon West Indian affairs, but who, like most writers upon that subject, had never been in the country, says, "Negroes live in dwellings like stables:" now the fact is, I never could find, although I often tried, from whence he drew the similitude: had he said that the white population of the West Indies

lived very generally in barns, he would not have exaggerated much—for nineteen houses out of twenty, are more like barns than anything else; having the sides nearly open, and the rafters uncovered, without any ceiling. Their appearance is at first most uncomfortable; but a few months' experience accustoms the eye to this manner of building, which is cooler, and leaves no room for rats and other vermin to establish themselves, as they do in a ceiled roof; so that in spite of West India houses being more like barns than dwelling-houses, they are preferred so.

I only dwell thus upon the subject, in order to convince my readers, how perfectly unable those who have not lived in a country are, to judge wisely of the houses necessary for the comfort of its inhabitants; and how very ridiculous such comparisons appear to those who have resided there, and who can, from experience, judge of the dwellings most appropriate to the convenience of those resident in such a country.

Place a negro in a comfortable little cottage, built after the English fashion,—his neat fireside, — his nice-looking bed, blankets, and warm curtains,—a glass window;—give him an English breakfast, tea, and supper, and also English clothing, and you would make him quite as unhappy as an English ploughman would be in a negro house, with negro fare and clothing. It is our bounden duty as Christians, to instruct the negroes in religion, and help them forward in civilization; but if by civilization it is intended to make them live in the same manner as Europeans, I would say that the negroes would not submit to such an arrangement; and beyond a doubt it would make them most uncomfortable and unhealthy. Every country has its own customs, and these customs are the result of the climate, which dictates even to the savage how to eat, lodge and clothe himself. Many most important improvements might doubtless be made in all these matters; but they must be improvements upon the same plan now existing; for as to intro-

ducing English customs, this would be both cruel and unwise. I therefore assert that the negroes are comfortably lodged; but it is a comfort appropriate to their character and country, and would as ill suit with an English peasant's ideas of comfort, as an English peasant's would with theirs.

I landed in St. Vincent with my head full of those ideas respecting slavery which have been so long popular, and which are at this moment about to effect such important changes; but I was not so utterly carried away by preconceived notions, as to be insensible to the opportunity now afforded me of investigating the subject personally. As soon therefore as I could understand the negro's broken language, and was sufficiently accustomed to the climate to walk out, I made a point of passing almost every afternoon among the different estates within reach of Kingstown. In these walks, I had daily and abundant opportunities of seeing the field people at work, and of visiting them in their houses, and chatting with them fami-

liarly. Having therefore informed my readers of the means by which I was enabled to make the observations I have done, I shall at once proceed to describe their houses, which are, as I before observed, placed all together, so as to resemble a little village.

The houses are built in various ways, some of stone, cemented by mud and white-washed; some are built of wood, while others are wove like basket-work,—the interstices being filled up with clay and mud, which, when white-washed, look very nice. They thatch them neatly with megass. They have no chimneys, as they rarely work in doors. As to the size of their house, that is in some measure dependent upon the rank of the negro, and the number in family. Generally speaking, the area of negro houses varies from fifteen feet by twenty, to twenty feet by thirty. Some single men and single women have a house with only one sitting room, and a smaller chamber apart for their bed-room. But head negroes, or families, have always two good rooms, and some have three.

They have windows according to the size and number of their rooms, with window shutters to let down at night. All the houses have locks to their doors, which are made of wood by the negroes, and fasten very securely; many, however, supply themselves with padlocks besides. The floor is generally earthen, but the best room is often boarded. Negroes of character and rank,—for I know not how better to express myself, being more civilized, have many articles of furniture. Among others they have bedsteads with mosquito curtains, their bedding being for the most part a bag filled with the dried plantain leaf. This I have myself slept upon, and used in my own family, and have found it a very comfortable bed indeed. They have a bolster and pillows of the same materials; blankets (one Witney blanket is given every year by the master), a good sheet, and very often a nice bed-quilt, the two latter articles are furnished by themselves. A little shelved corner cupboard, displaying many a showy coloured plate, cup, and saucer, is a common

piece of furniture; a good table, one or two benches, and some chairs, with a high table to serve as a sideboard, upon which are displayed the tumblers and wine glasses, often a large shade for the candle,—these, with their box of clothes, form the general furniture of a good industrious negro's house, who is probably a head man; for a common field negro, although he can afford all this, has not in general reached that stage of civilization that engenders the desire of possessing such articles. The cooking utensils are very few and simple, consisting of two or three iron pots, in which the negro makes his soup, stews, &c. A strong wooden pestle and mortar is to be found in all their houses, for beating the boiled plantain down to a mash, a favourite dish they call "*tum-tum.*" They cook in a little thatched shed close to their houses, but not attached to them. A hog-sty, and a place for their poultry, which they rear in great quantities, are also adjoining their house. Indeed, the better sort of negroes have their dwellings often extremely neat and

clean; many a Scotch cottager might blush to see them.

As soon as a negro girl attains the age of sixteen or seventeen, she probably gets a husband; and the male children, perhaps a year or two later, get wives, when of course they have houses of their own; negroes, therefore, never have many children living with them. On occasion of a marriage, it is often necessary to build a house, and there is then usually a merry-making: the master or manager deals out rum and sugar to those who have helped to build it, and the new-comer frequently gives a supper on the night he takes possession.

The houses of the common field negroes are built exactly of the same materials, and on the same plan with those described; but some few have not three rooms, though most of them have an additional chamber, and a small place where they keep their cooking utensils. In good weather, they all cook in the open air before their house door; and if it be rainy, they kindle a fire in the middle of the room, and the

door is left open to make an outlet for the smoke. Many field people have bedsteads, and some have curtains. The plantain leaf bed is general, and blankets are annually provided; some have sheets; but these are luxuries which many of them do not value, and would not use. You may guess, almost to a certainty, as to the character and degree of civilization of a negro, by the general appearance of his house. A table, chair, and bench, is to be found in every house; also a box, with the inmates' clothes; but those who are idle, lazy, savage, or of bad character (and there are few estates that can boast of having none of that description), are destitute of these comforts.

I have paid great personal attention to the manner in which negroes are lodged, because it seems to be thought in England that they are in this respect quite neglected. After having visited negro houses without number, I do not hesitate to say, that negroes are more comfortably lodged than the working classes of either England or Scotland. You cannot fail to re-

mark upon every estate, that the work-people's houses are placed in the healthiest situation, never so elevated as to be cold, nor so low as to be damp: the drains round them, or water-paths, as the negro calls them, are watched with the greatest care, and kept clean, and nothing that could create damp is suffered to be near their houses. No inhabited house is ever allowed to be out of repair; neither is it left to the negro to ask for what may be necessary; the houses are examined very frequently by the white people; and, during their master's time, they are employed in making all tight and comfortable before the rainy season commences.

I recollect walking one evening over the lovely estate of Montrose, in Kingstown valley: it was in the midst of crop-time, when all were as busy as possible. All the negro houses I passed were shut up, excepting one, whose open door attracted my attention. A nice clean-looking negro woman eyed me for a moment. I said, "Good evening," as is usual in passing

a negro: but she looked again, and said, "Eh, misses, you no know me." I was sorry I could not directly say that I did, for negroes cannot bear to be forgotten. She saw, however, that I did not recollect her; and she said, "Misses, me L ——, you no mind me when I comed to make cake." I now did recollect her; and she added, "Never mind, misses, wont you come in and see my house?" I did so, and she dusted two chairs, and two stools for my children, and bringing out a plateful of cassada cake, she gave each of them some, saying she was sorry she had no ripe plantain or banana down to gie 'em. I said, "So you don't work now."—"No misses, no for one month gone by." (She expected to be confined in a month). "And how do you employ yourself?"—"I makes *mobee*, and takes it down to town and sells it." "And what is your husband?"—"He just a field negro." "You have got supper boiling there, I see."—"Yes, misses, callialou pot." "You seem to have a very nice house." "Yes, misses, I'll shew you the chamber;" and

she accordingly opened a door which displayed their bed, with mosquito curtains, and their boxes of clothes. While leaving the house of this common field negro's wife, and glancing at the neatness and cleanness of the apartments, and the display of useful articles of furniture, as much, or more than the climate required, I could not avoid drawing a comparison between the situation of this woman, exempted from toil, provided with every necessary—with no anxiety as to the event at hand, no doctor, no nurse, no cordials to pay for,—and the condition of her who, among the labouring classes of England, must work often to the very hour of her confinement; and whose hard-gained earnings, joined with that of her husband's, are all absorbed in the purchase of half the comforts which she requires.

All negroes have a piece of ground behind their houses for a garden: some will not be at the trouble to keep this ground clean, and weeds and vegetables accordingly grow promiscuously; but there are others who keep it very

neat, with grenadillas, water melons, and vines growing in order and profusion. This fruit they carry to market; and it is a bad vine that will not yield them 2*l.* sterling per annum. In this garden they have sweet cassada, Lima beans, calialou, tanias, gub-a-gub, peas, pigeon pea bushes, &c.: probably in December they sow English peas, and plant cabbages for the market: those negroes who incline to make money in this way, are all furnished by their master or the manager with English seeds. Pines also are generally cultivated in the negro garden. This back garden is a great comfort to a negro; because here he has all the necessary vegetables, for daily use, so that in case of his having but little time to spare, or in bad weather, he can supply himself without going to his provision-grounds, which are farther distant than his garden. But plantains and yams keep well for more than a week after they are brought down from the provision-grounds. These gardens are always fenced round, and generally are covered over with Lima

and other creole beans for soup. If a negro has not a good garden, it is his own fault; for his master gives him ground for it, and every encouragement to improve it, by furnishing him with plants and seeds; and in that country so very little labour is necessary to raise a super-abundance of excellent roots, vegetables, and fruits, that when a negro house is found without this comfort attached to it, there is no difficulty in pronouncing the inhabitant to be a lazy, good-for-nothing character.

Those negroes who have not a regular-made bedstead, have four posts driven into the floor of the room, and sticks placed cross-ways like a lath-bottomed bed: these bedsteads are always raised two or three feet above the floor, and the plantain leaf mattrass is placed upon them. This is *the worst species of bed* known among negroes; and it must not be forgotten, that those slaves who have not a regular bedstead, curtains, and sheets, with other articles of household furniture, are not destitute of them from utter inability to procure them, which is

by far the most usual cause of the absence of the common comforts of life in Great Britain. If a slave have not some household furniture, it is because he is indifferent to the comfort of it: and there are indeed some who have only a bed, table, and bench, with cooking utensils, who are very good people, but who do not consider household furniture as a comfort: the possession of it would confer upon them no happiness; and they either spend their money in fine clothes or jewellery, or, as frequently happens, hoard up their savings, which they tie up in a piece of dirty rag, and thrust it under the thatch of a house, or put it into some hole. There is no more absurd error than to suppose that men in all classes of society, and in different countries, require the same things to render them comfortable. The Tong merchant prefers his chop-sticks to your silver forks; the English labourer prefers his own beer to the squire's claret; the Andalusian would sooner stretch himself on boards, than sink into a down bed; and the negro neither

understands the refinements of a gentleman nor requires the comforts of an European. Negroes are well off, according to their ideas of comfort and the climate in which they reside: they are abundantly supplied; and I am by no means sure that we should be conferring any benefit by introducing European fashions in the colonies—so that, while I would labour to civilize and inform the negro, which will by and by produce all its effects,—taste, among others,—I would also studiously avoid suddenly introducing, or unnaturally encouraging artificial wants; which, although originally luxuries, become in time necessary to comfort.

Instruct the negro in religion, teach him to be cleanly and orderly; but, as you value his true happiness, introduce no artificial wants; he enjoys his calialou soup as much out of his calibash, as the nobleman does his turtle soup in the finest chased silver; and it is cruelty, not benevolence, to teach him to be discontented with the things he possesses. I shall therefore conclude this chapter, by assuring my readers

that from the results of long personal experience, I can avouch that negroes are lodged infinitely better than, with few exceptions, the working population of England.

Negroes who live in town as domestics, have always a boarded floor to their houses. I have seen a few single men and women who had only one room, but such houses are by no means common. They have good bedsteads, bedding of plantain leaf, feather bolster and pillows, good blanket, sheets and coverlet; chairs, sofa, cupboard, and mahogany table. I have frequently seen a side-table with tumblers, and shades for the candle; looking-glass, two or three boxes full of clothes, showy prints in gilt frames, &c. &c. They always keep their houses clean and tidy inside, and have a great variety of stone-ware in the shape of plates, tea-cups, &c.; but these are seldom bought by them, being generally stolen, and are regularly displayed merely for ornament—a calabash being the usual substitute for holding their victuals, and being equally clean with a china bowl, it

is preferred by them; for it costs nothing. Negroes who have been in England, always complained to me that there was "noting for noting in England," meaning, in plain English, that for the most trifling article payment must be given; whereas they are by nature supplied in the West Indies with a variety of real comforts. Thus the calibash tree, which grows every where in abundance, is full of ripe fruit four times every year; the fruit may be cut, from the size of a common orange to something larger than the largest man's head. The inside is of no use, and is hollowed out, and then the rind forms all sorts of cups, bowls, and bottles, as the negro says, "for nothing," but the trouble of picking up and scraping it out.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NEGRO POPULATION.

Negro dress—Expensive notions—Jewellery and perfumery—Effects of climate—Erroneous notions.

NEGRO clothing is distributed annually at Christmas, at which season the ships arrive from England. It consists of strong blue woollen cloth, called Pennistowns—(the same that is so generally worn by the lower classes of females in Scotland for petticoats); that sort of coarse, strong, unbleached linen, known by the name of Oznaburgs, a felt hat, needles, thread, tape, scissors, and buttons, to the men.

Of the blue Pennistowns, they receive every year at Christmas six yards, a yard and half

wide. Of the linen, five yards. The allowance of clothing for children depends upon their age; but after twelve years of age, the full quantity is given. Additional clothing is afterwards distributed to those whose work is harder, and very often indeed also to those whose carelessness has deprived them of clothing; for during the rainy season—*clothed they must be.* Every individual, from birth, receives one blanket annually; and in the event of an accouchment, there is absolutely not a want that is not supplied. I have often been in their houses at such times, and could not help thinking, how much better off they were for clothing, bedding, and baby-linen, than the great majority of the lower ranks in Britain.

Their gala dresses are provided very often by themselves, although their master and mistress make many presents of this kind to the deserving. Field negroes dress in some respects differently from town servants.

Head negroes upon estates, in full dress at holiday time, are extremely gay. They have

all fine broad cloth, either made into jackets, such as gentlemen very often wear of a morning in the West Indies, or coats: they have neat waistcoats, either of black kerseymere, or white jean—as they are quite aware that a coloured waistcoat is not dress—their shirt is always of fine linen, and the collar of a fashionable shape, which, with the cravat, is as stiff as any reasonable dandy could desire. White jean, or linen trowsers, are the usual wear; all head people have shoes, and all servants have stockings, and a long cloth coat; this is given them by their master; but the country people often purchase those articles for themselves. I have seen an estate negro in St. Vincent, dressed at Christmas time as well in every respect as any gentleman could be; and he was a slave whose master was, and had been long absent: he told me every thing he wore was of his own purchasing: he had a quizzing glass, and as good a hat as any white man in the colony; he had a watch ribbon and key, but whether or not he wore a watch, I cannot tell, as I did not put

the question to him; but I have seen many with watches and seals. The more common field people have equally good shirts, trowsers and waistcoats; but they have seldom or ever long coats, though frequently good broad cloth jackets; but the most common fashion for them is white jean, or striped coloured jean jackets. They do not often wear shoes, and never stockings.

The boys are extremely well dressed; and as they all receive a new hat at Christmas, this adds to the general neat appearance of the negro population at that season.

As for the women, I hardly know how to describe their gala dresses, they are so various. The wives or daughters of estates' head people, have the best of course—if I except domestics, who dress still gayer. They have fine worked muslin gowns, with handsome flounces; satin and sarsenet bodices are very common; their under garments are of the best materials, and they have either good cotton or silk stockings; their kid dancing shoes are often of the gayest

colours, while their expensive turbans are adjusted with a grace, that makes the dress really appear elegant.

It is common for them to have, not a hair dresser, but a head dresser, or rather a turban putter on, upon such occasions; and for the mere putting on of the turban, they pay a quarter dollar,—not less than 1*s.* 1*d.* sterling!! This is a custom not confined to domestics, but predominates throughout all ranks of the female slave population. They have all beautiful handkerchiefs upon their necks; some are of British manufacture, but many are costly silk ones from Martinique,—while others wear them of India muslin.

The real value of their jewellery is considerable; it consists of massy gold ear-rings, and rings upon their fingers. Coral necklaces, and handsome gold chains, lockets, and other ornaments of this description. The more common field female negro, very often if elderly, is decked out in a very large-patterned chintz, or perhaps the bodice is made of this, while the

skirt is of muslin; or, *vice versa*, the shirt chintz, and bodice and sleeves muslin. They all have one really good necklace; but they often also wear along with it, half a dozen other necklaces, of coloured glass beads, such as light blue, yellow, white, and purple. Every negro has a garnet necklace; all have ear-rings, and rings on their fingers: and at Christmas time, a handsome new turban too is worn. The very youngest baby is well dressed at such a time, and even for a child they scorn old clothes; indeed it rarely happens that the same dresses are worn twice at Christmas. I have heard them say to each other, "Look at so and so, see how mean she be, she wore that very same dress last Christmas." White muslin frocks, and a nice new handkerchief for the children as a turban, are universally worn: abundance of coloured beads, ear-rings, and finger-rings. Some few, whose mothers are fashionable waiting maids, put shoes, generally coloured ones, upon their children; but the country children never wear them.

Both girls and boys are fond of coloured ribbons; the boys wear them round the hat, set off with a smart bow, and the girls wear them as a sash. This is the only piece of half worn dress that a negro will condescend to wear; but ribbons, although half worn, are much valued by the young people. Their dresses are made up very often by their mistress and her family: for two months before Christmas, and also before Easter, I used to be as busy as possible, cutting out dresses, superintending the trimmings, and inventing different fashions for them,—for they imagine that what is too common, cannot be very genteel. As for the men, their shirts and trowsers must be cut for them; and many a pair have I superintended in this way, and have occasionally, though not in St. Vincent, acted as tailor. Negroes fancy that a white lady can do every thing; and they say, "Misses, if you no do for me, who you do it for?" In this way their tailoring and dress-making is most generally executed; and really I do think,

that the negroes in full dress during the holidays, contented and happy as they used to be, was one of the most interesting scenes imaginable. Both men and women have nice white pocket handkerchiefs to wipe away the perspiration; and both sexes, young and old, are perfumed with French lavender water: indeed so common is this, that I was surprised soon after my arrival, by one of our servants asking me one day for some lavender water, as his was done. There was to be company that evening; and I afterwards observed, that the men servants were in the habit, whenever they were in dress, of using perfumes.

After such a description as the foregoing, my readers may naturally inquire how it is, if the negroes both receive so much clothing, and also purchase so much for themselves, that they appear often as if they had scarcely a rag to cover them: this arises from two causes; the first is that a sense of decency is scarcely known to the savage, and thus it is that it is easy to trace the progress of civilization in different

negroes, according to their style of every-day dress. Another reason is, the heat of the climate, which renders it quite impossible for any one to wear in that country the same clothing as in England; and it is no exaggeration to say, that the modesty of that lady who would appear in England with no thicker clothing than she can endure in the West Indies, would be thought rather questionable. Wearing the finest flannel next the skin is always considered safe, and it certainly does not heat the body; but all the other garments must be of the lightest texture. In good weather, field people wear as little clothing as possible; the men working often in trowsers without a shirt, and the women frequently throwing their arms out of the sleeves of their upper garment. In cold weather, they put on an abundance of clothes; for although they never complain of heat, they are very sensible of cold, and dislike it exceedingly. They are most active in dry, hot weather; but in the cold, damp season, the energy of both body and

mind is impaired. When I first arrived at St. Vincent, my servants used to clean their knives and boots and shoes, in the sun: I thought this must be very diagreeable to them, and had a shade put up for them, but after it was finished, not one of them would go there to work,—and when asked the reason, they said, "Sun good for neger." All negroes wear their hats at work, and the women a handkerchief underneath. Some estates give Kilmarnock bonnets, besides hats, which the people like.

There are, however, many field people, both male and female, who although not superior in rank in the estate, yet are in themselves superior people, and never appear in the unceremonious dress already described. It is nothing uncommon for negro men at work alone, when a sudden heavy shower is about to fall, to pull off their shirt, and hide it under a bush. The rain quickly runs off their skins, which are oily; and as soon as it is fair, they are dry again, and then the shirt is put on dry and comfortable. The little negro children seem

to understand this from instinct, and never run out, during rain, without taking the precaution of leaving their clothes behind them. Negroes are extremely fond of bathing; and little infants, of not a year old, will sit for hours together in the shallow bed of a river. This braces and strengthens them; and it is found that a very free use of the cold bath contributes much to the health of the white population also. Should a negro get very wet and remain with damp clothes on, he is almost sure to suffer severely: pleurisy is often the consequence, and the disease proceeds with such rapidity, that a very few hours terminates it one way or another. The planters, however, are all half physicians; that is, they know the indications of approaching disease; and upon the slightest appearance of pleurisy, they administer calomel and jalap, and the estate's medical attendant is instantly sent for to bleed the patient. It is astonishing how few deaths occur from this disease in consequence of the prompt assistance which is uniformly given.

There is no trifling; the most violent remedies are applied without delay, and the best effects generally follow.

It is nearly impossible to get children regularly to wear clothes under six years of age. I have myself tried every method I could think of with a little girl of one of my servants, but in vain; the child used to tug at her frock, which was all I asked her to wear, and when by no strength she could undo it, she would go to the boys' pantry, and taking a knife, cut it off, making her appearance at the door of my room, laughing with delight at her adroitness in getting rid of such an annoyance, and throwing the frock in at the door. Yet in the cold season this child, like all others, wore her clothing, and used to cry at times from the severity of the cold when in Trinidad.

All head people upon estates are uniformly well dressed, neat, and clean; and though it is in their own fashion, they look nicer and much cleaner than English country people. Their clothes are seldom much mended, and they

make a point indeed of appearing like what the other negroes call them,—Mr. so and so. In short, they are negro gentlemen in their conduct, dress, and manner. Their wives and daughters do not every day dress in so superior a style, but still they dress considerably better than common field people, and never dispense with their upper garment. The majority of servants, even of the lowest rank, dress better than common field negroes. Female servants wear fine light calico printed gowns, or white muslin, which are alike common; they make them low, and generally with short sleeves; they sometimes wear a Madras handkerchief about the neck, but more frequently not. They have always good necklaces, ear-rings, gold rings, and a nice handkerchief for a turban.

When I first landed in the West Indies, I was shocked at the unclothed state in which I saw many negroes; but a few months' careful observation soon shewed me that it was not the want of clothes, but the dislike to their burden that occasioned this. As the negro advances

in civilization, this will no longer be the case. The sense of decency will gain the ascendency, and predominate, as much as the love of ease and coolness does at present over every other. Head negroes on estates generally receive some present, in the way of clothing, upon the conclusion of crop: and should any accident, arising even from bad conduct, have deprived a negro during the season of part of his clothing, it is always supplied again; for unnecessary as it seems to be to them in warm weather, they would die, were they not well clothed in woollen dresses, in the damp and cold season.

Aged and superannuated negroes have the same allowance of clothing at Christmas as the others, and should they be unable to make it up for themselves, some of the other people are employed to do this for them. The estates in some colonies give out the clothing ready made to put on; but in others, the more common plan is to distribute the cloth, with needles, thread, tapes, &c. Good negroes are careful of their clothing, and instead of wearing it at the

season when they receive it, they prudently lay it up until the rainy, damp season arrives. But upon every estate, especially those nearest town, there is a greater proportion of improvident, careless, and even desperate characters; such are uniformly indolent, equally for themselves as for their masters, and are often incorrigible runaways. Negroes of this description either take no care of their clothing, or they sell it to hucksters, who give them fine showy clothes instead, not at all suitable for a working dress. Such people are often improvident enough to exchange all their blue Pennistowns for some article of jewellery; and others, who are so irregular and lazy as not to cultivate their grounds—sell their clothing for plantains, or whatever else they want at the moment: they are, in short, savages, and never look forward beyond the present day. Want of clothing is to them no punishment; but when the bad weather arrives, they are sure enough to come shivering to the master or the attorney, and clothing must again be given to them. It

is astonishing how much the expense of clothing is increased by the misconduct of runaway and bad negroes, who nevertheless always turn to their masters when they are assailed by want or distress; for the masters, independent of common humanity, are bound by law to clothe and feed them, without any reference to their deserts. There are some negroes of good character, who are fond of a change of clothing, and a half-worn soldier's suit has great attractions for them: such people often sell the estate's clothing, and purchase a red coat from the garrison, after it has become too shabby for the soldier. This is a very comfortable dress for them; and I have often seen eight or ten negroes hoeing the field in the worn-out jackets used in one of his Majesty's regiments. So fond are negroes generally of bartering their clothing, that I have seen jackets belonging to a St. Vincent estate, with the stamp of the property upon them, worn in Trinidad by Trinidad negroes.

It is obvious that any regular allowance of clothing to domestics cannot be adhered to. A head man servant requires about eight or nine good linen shirts, and probably the dozen is completed by blue-and-white check ones. His trowsers are of linen, coloured striped jean, and nankeen; and about eighteen pairs will be requisite every year. This personage wears shoes—a very expensive article in the West Indies—for a head servant is too much of a gentleman to wear thick or strong shoes. I recollect B——, a head servant of ours, who was sent to a store in quest of shoes for himself, and brought home a pair which cost 14*s*. 4*d*. sterling. I ventured to tell him that I disapproved of his choice, as they were light thin dress shoes, which would not serve him many weeks;—but his anwer was given with great nonchalance in these words:—"Misses, me could not dance in tick shoes; they too heavy and hot." In fact, this man would not have deigned to wear such shoes as I wore every day

in walking out. This class of negro domestics are extravagant beyond bounds, and care not how many clothes they destroy.

The habits of female servants in the same rank are no less expensive, and their clothing costs a great sum annually. Domestics of an inferior class are clothed not quite so well, but still they scorn to accept of those dark cotton calicoes and ginghams for gowns, such as servants at home do not despise for common working dresses. There is no getting them to mend or patch their clothes, and when torn, they consider them fit only to be thrown away. Yet these same people in hot weather, although possessing plenty of clothes, will persist in going about in such a state as makes a new comer suppose them to be the most wretched of human beings, while at the same time they have boxes full of clothes, which they will not use.

The want of investigating such subjects has been the cause of much misrepresentation. People go out to the West Indies, and see both

in the field and in the house, negroes in the state I have described them to be. No sooner do they behold such spectacles, than they at once ignorantly exclaim, "Here are negro slaves who ought to be clothed!—look at them—is it not dreadful that civilized Europeans and their descendants ever forget what every man owes to his neighbour,—compelling slaves to work the soil, and labour for their advantage, while they have hardly rags to cover them!" But the proprietors of negroes are free from all blame; for it is their own personal interest that their slave should be clothed, inasmuch as it proves his advance in civilization, which renders him always a better servant, and more reasonable; and contributes greatly to his general health. I shall add no more upon the subject of clothing, but proceed to that of food.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEGRO POPULATION.

Negro food—Provision-grounds—West India fruits and vegetables, and manner of cooking them—Prices of the produce of provision-grounds—Stock rearing—General returns of provision-grounds—Manner of life of the negro—Negro cookery — Negro children — Singular custom—Succession to property—Love of barter.

EVERY field negro has two pounds of excellent salt fish served out weekly, and head people have four pounds. A pound and a half is allowed for every child, from the day of its birth until twelve years of age, when full allowance is given. This is the most favourite food of the negro, and they prefer it to salt beef or pork, a small piece of which they relish occa-

sionally. They have (besides the garden which I have already described as being attached to their house) a portion of ground at a short distance from the negro houses. In this ground they plant provisions; chiefly plantain and Banana trees. Two full grown bunches of plantains are worth from 4*s.* to 4*s.* 6*d.* sterling, if bought wholesale, but by retail they are exactly double the price. A bunch contains no certain number of plantains, but a good full bunch will seldom exceed thirty or forty plantains, and seldom fall short of twenty. One hundred plantains is considered by a negro, along with salt fish, as much as he can consume in a week. The plantain and yam are to the negro, what the potatoe is to the lower classes in Britain. Every good plantain tree yields one perfect bunch annually; when this is taken off, the tree must be cut down to the ground, and in the following year, two or three other trees sprout from the old stock, and they each yield their bunch. Thus every successive year the crop is increased with great rapidity.

The banana is cultivated precisely in the same way, and yields the same increase; its value, also, being nearly the same as the plantain. Negroes have the bread-fruit-tree in their grounds, one good tree of which will bear more than a hundred heads annually,—each head being worth from 3*d.* to 8*d.* according to its size. Yams are planted by cuttings, in the same way as the English potatoe. They are of the clematis tribe: strong stakes are driven in to support them, although some negroes allow them to creep upon the ground like strawberry plants. The root of the yam is often larger than a white-globe turnip, but generally of an elongated irregular shape.

There are great varieties of yams—Portuguese, Guinea, water, white, and the cush-cush yam. Some few, when boiled, are of a deep purple, but a colour resembling a dry English potatoe is the most common. The cush-cush yam is the smallest and most delicate. They are a very farinaceous vegetable. The tania is a root something of the size of a potatoe,—

resembling it also in colour; it is farinaceous, though not so much so as the yam.

The eddoe root is at times cultivated, but it also grows wild: it nearly resembles the tania; is doubly useful, as its leaves make an excellent substitute for spinage, similar to calialou; in fact it is a more delicate vegetable than English spinage. The sweet-cassada is a farinaceous root, resembling the carrot only in shape, for in colour and taste it is more like the yam; it is of very quick growth, and gives immense returns. These are the principal roots cultivated in the negro provision-grounds: their value is all nearly alike, and one dollar's worth of any of the above roots is, in point of sustenance, equal to one dollar's worth of plantains. These fruits and roots come into use at different seasons; but I take their value from the time of the year when they are abundant, for at the season when they are rare, they are sold at a considerable advance in price. The cassada, or cassavi, is a root of great value. When unprepared, or even when the juice is extracted from

this root, it is deadly poison both to man and to the brute creation. After being drawn out of the ground, it is scraped clean and washed, then grated; for which process the negroes have graters of a large size. The juice is afterwards expressed, by means of pressing the grated cassada in a bag or strainer, made for the purpose. After being dried in the sun, it is put into a large pan (which is a fixture, in general supplied by every estate for the use of the negroes), and a fire is made underneath this pan; then putting in the grated cassada, they turn it frequently for some time, until it becomes as dry as kiln-dried oatmeal, and it is then a very wholesome article of food, and is known by the name of farine. The juice expressed from the grated cassada is saved; and being allowed to settle, it precipitates to the bottom a very white paste-like substance. The water is then poured off, and this substance is put out upon plates or large plantain leaves, in the sun, when it dries, becomes hard, and forms excellent starch, which sells for about 8*d.* the quart bottle.

Farine sells from 4*s.* to 8*s.* per bushel, according to the season.

Negroes cultivate a variety of the pulse tribe in their grounds—Lima beans, which sell at about 6*d.* per dish;—the common kidney, or French bean, as known in England, is used both in the pod and in the bean. The gub-a-gub, or black-eyed pea, is also excellent; and the value of all these is the same as the Lima bean. English peas they do not like; but many cultivate them for the market;—they are worth 2*s.* a dish. They come into season in the end of December, and are quite out by the end of June. English cabbage, also, is cultivated merely for sale; it is worth from 4*d.* to even 8*d.* per head. Turnips and carrots are never used by negroes; but many raise them, also, for the market. Three, or at most four, turnips or carrots, fetch 6*d.* sterling. Onions will not grow in St. Vincent, nor in several other colonies; but shalots thrive well, and they make a good substitute: they are sold at about 1*d.* for a small bunch. The tomata comes to great per-

fection, and the negroes use a great deal of it in soup—they are worth about 2*d.* sterling per dozen. Pumpkins grow luxuriantly: of these the negro is fond, but he raises them, also, for sale: they are worth from 2*d.* to 4*d.* The pigeon-pea is an uncommonly nice vegetable: its cultivation is easy, and every estate is full of pigeon-pea bushes. The plant is not unlike our laburnum, and the pods and peas are of that size. They bear so richly, that a negroe can pick in ten minutes as many peas as would serve for soup for dinner to four or five grown persons; and if he choose to sell them, he would get from 4*d.* to 6*d.* according to the season. Calialou may be called the spinage of the West Indies; and is a favourite vegetable with white, coloured, and black. From 1*d.* to 2*d.* will buy as much of it as is necessary for soup for four or five persons. Christophine is more properly a fruit, as it grows upon a vine; it is planted about November, by means of burying the bean, which is found inside the fruit. The bean is put at the root of a high tree—in a few

months it climbs to the top, and in six months is covered with a constant succession of fruit, known by the name of Christophine in general, though the name varies in different colonies. The fruit is somewhat like a pear—is shaped irregularly, ribbed, and of a light pea green; and sometimes, mashed like turnips, it is simply boiled; sometimes it is made into good soup, and is worth 2*d.* per dish. In taste, it resembles sea-kale. The fruit of the papaw tree, when unripe, is good either boiled or mashed as turnips: it grows in such great abundance, that it will fetch no price. When ripe, the papaw is sometimes sold—two large ones for a penny: in size it is equal to an English melon. Cucumbers grow abundantly, and are peculiarly excellent in the West Indies; they are so plentiful that they will not sell in season, but out of season they will fetch a penny each. Negroes are fond of them, and taking the skin off, they eat them as we would an apple; nor are they ever found to disagree with them.

Sweet pot herbs are at all times to be found

in the negro's ground: sweet marjoram grows luxuriantly; thyme is more difficult to rear, but mint, sage, and marjoram grow readily, by merely sticking a sprig in the ground. They sell a good bunch of pot herbs for eight-pence sterling. Every variety of capsicum is to be found upon a West Indian estate; indeed, they are almost a weed; but peppers, nevertheless, are purchased in town with avidity, and I have paid two-pence for a dozen of moderate-sized country peppers: at the height of the season you can get three or four dozen for two-pence.

The fruit-trees upon an estate are, by common consent, the perquisite of the negroes belonging to it. The West Indian islands differ as to their productiveness in fruit; but, generally speaking, there is a great variety of fruits, according to their season; and upon every property the negroes make a considerable sum by the sale of the fruit. The mango is certainly the most abundant. This fruit hangs in such thick clusters, that the produce of one tree is immense. Of the mango, there are many

varieties, but the small ones are the best. Some very small delicate kinds, of a yellow colour, are to be found in the botanic garden at St. Vincent: these are most delicious, though their turpentine flavour is disagreeable to those unused to it. The large kidney-shaped green mango is coarse and full of threads; and I know nothing so perfectly resembling it in taste as a coarse field carrot, with the addition of a small portion of turpentine and sugar. Mangoes are said to produce leprosy; and I have observed that negroes who eat many of them are very liable to cutaneous diseases. The alligator pear is a pleasant wholesome fruit, larger than our largest English pears, with two seeds inside: when ripe, it is soft and mellow, and the inside exactly resembles fine yellow butter. It is from this that it is often called subaltern's butter. It is generally eaten for breakfast, either with sugar and lime juice, or with salt and pepper. The negroes are very fond of the alligator pear, and generally call it the zabaca pear. They sell three large ones,

when in season, for a penny. The sappadillo tree produces a fruit larger, but in colour and flavour very like the English medlar. This fruit is not so abundant, and sells for ten-pence per dozen, or thereabouts. There are several sorts of plum trees—the Jamaica, the hog plum, and varieties of the Java plum. These fruits are highly astringent; and eaten freely, must be dangerous. During the season they are to be had in abundance, for a mere trifle. The mountain-pear is one of the best, if not the very best fruit of the West Indies. The plant is a cactus, and the negroes have it in their grounds, and sell it often for a penny each. It is in size something similar to a ripe fig; of an olive green and red colour outside, and its inside resembles a mixture of salt and ground pepper, from its numerous small black seeds. It is always cool, and may be eaten in almost any quantity, without danger. Melons are often raised in negro grounds: they grow without any attention, further than putting the seed

in the ground. They are worth from four-pence to eight-pence each, according to their size, which is often immense. Pines are every where found on the provision-grounds: they grow like a weed, and the poorer the soil, the better is the pine. I have bought them for a penny, and have also paid for a very large one, out of season, as much as a shilling sterling. Grapes are also found; but they are generally cultivated by the coloured or free-negro population. They resemble the large Portugal grape as imported here from Portugal and Spain. They would be of the best quality, were they suffered to remain long enough upon the vine; but the depredation among them, and the injury they sustain from insects, are so great, that they cut the fruit prematurely, and the grapes consequently are seldom to be had so good as we find them raised in a hot-house at home. In point of beauty, however, there is no comparison; for the bunches are exceedingly fine, and the grapes of a very large size. About two shillings per lb. is the common price. The white muscat of

Alexandria, is the common grape: purple ones are very rare indeed.

Maize, known in England by the name of Indian corn, is a great source of wealth among the slaves, and also of personal comfort. With maize he feeds his poultry, and occasionally his hogs before he kills them. When green he roasts it, and in this state it is excellent; when ripe and dried in the sun, he grinds it (and there is always a mill on every estate), and uses it either as meal to bake for cakes, or he boils it into a sort of pottage. There is not one slave upon an estate who cannot raise an abundance of these fruits, roots, and vegetables—far more than he can use for his own consumption. The great majority of negroes have their grounds fully stocked; some however, are lazy and will not work their grounds to the extent that they might do; while run-a-ways do no work at all, either for their masters or themselves, and live by plundering the provision-grounds of industrious negroes. There is not an instance of a negro who works well for his

owner, who has not his provision-grounds in the greatest order, and full of all sorts of supplies, both for himself and the market. Every individual has his own ground, and every mother has a fixed portion more for each child. In St. Vincent, Saturday from twelve at noon is allowed them to work their grounds, or else the whole day once every fortnight. Sunday is their own the whole year round. The half Saturday every week, or the whole every fortnight, is not given during crop time; otherwise no sugar could be made on Friday, Saturday, or Monday. For the sugar made on Friday must be potted on the following morning, and canes cut on Friday would be sour by Monday morning; the canes must be cut either the preceding night, or at most not more than twenty-four hours before they are ground in the mill. This, however, is no real loss to the negro; for after January, the principal season for preparing the ground for the reception of plants and roots is over, until the end of June, when the showers become frequent. During the dry months

little or nothing can be done; and what is planted, seldom or ever lives. If it does survive, it does not come to such maturity as to be of good quality; but in general the soil is so dry that the root or seed dies in the ground. This I know from my own experience and the negroes' information, upon this subject; and I feel certain that were Saturday given to them once a fortnight during the hot season, it would be put to very bad use.

Besides, if the crop time brings some little increase of work, it brings also its privileges and pleasures, and like harvest in Scotland, it is a very merry season. There is a regular contention who is to cut the last cane, and when this is done the rest of the day is spent in mirth and jollity. The mule boys dress themselves in ribbons, and as there is generally a fiddler upon the estate, he leads the procession up to the proprietor's, or if absent, the manager's, who provides wherewithal to make them merry. The women, who are well dressed, dance before the door, singing their wild

choruses of joy at the last cane being cut. The evening is ended by a general dance; and to the credit of the slaves, intoxication rarely appears among them.

During crop time, every slave may have as much hot and cold liquor as he chooses, and they have only to ask for a calibash full of rich syrup or some sugar, and they receive it. Those who are not inclined to intoxication, are never refused a little rum when they wish for it. There cannot be a more mistaken notion than that negroes generally dislike crop time; every good negro enjoys it; and as for lazy bad characters, they dislike working, whether for their master or themselves, and their only pleasure is sleeping away life. There is not a negro who cannot easily accumulate his 30*l.* sterling every year, and very many save much more. Besides, they procure bread, salt pork, salt beef, mackerel, corned fish, cakes or other nice things. For these they do not pay the value in money, but they barter their provisions.

Another source of the gains of the slave popu-

lation is their stock. They rear great quantities of fowls, and many rear ducks; guinea birds too, are generally raised by both the coloured and free negro population. They fatten a great number of pigs, and full grown hogs; indeed, many colonial markets are almost wholly supplied by the slaves. Pork of a most superior quality may be had two or three times a week, and always of a Sunday. Negroes also rear goats and kids for sale in abundance. When they kill a hog, they are very loathe to sell the head and feet; and if you wish for these, you must coax them as for a favour. These parts they keep for a treat to themselves. When I lived in St. Vincent, pork sold at eightpence sterling per. lb. A pig fit for roasting, fourteen shillings sterling. A chicken, two shillings. A full grown fowl, from three and sixpence to four and sixpence. A pair of ducks, twelve and sixpence. Arrow root, which I had almost forgotten to mention, is made in abundance by the negroes, and is prepared, nearly in the same way as the starch,

from the root of the manioc. It sells at two shillings, or thereabouts, the quart bottle, and can always be had in the coloured hucksters' shops.

The guava bush is indigenous to most of the islands of the West Indies, and every estate is more or less over-run with guavas. The St. Vincent guavas are considered of a very fine quality, and when stewed with sugar, are not unlike the flavour of a strawberry; at least, those who sigh for home, try to fancy this. Negroes pick them and sell them cheap enough when in season, which is from May to September. A great quantity of this fruit is made into jelly by coloured free women. The negro children hurt themselves much by eating too freely of the raw guava, which is a very tempting fruit for them, but particularly injurious. When I say that any industrious negro may save 30*l.* sterling yearly with ease, I really mean save; for besides this, he will purchase all those little articles he requires,—candles, soap, now and then salt pork and beef, &c.

besides plenty of fine dresses for himself, his wife or wives, and children; for good negroes have no small pride in dressing their family, as they call it, "handsome."

There are few estates which are not situate in the vicinity of some river. These streams abound in mullet, cray fish—resembling a small lobster, eels, and mud fish. The negroes are not prevented from having the full benefit of fishing; and I have many a time paid a slave eighteen pence for fresh-water fish, which he had caught and brought to town during the two hours allotted for his dinner. I once asked a negro who brought me some mullet in this way, how he managed to have anything to eat and catch fish also? He immediately informed me, "he wife cook a victual, no him;" at the same time apparently astonished at my supposing that he could be so silly as not to have a wife to cook for him.

I have now enumerated many of the different methods by which slaves not only live well, and purchase fine clothing; but some a great

deal of it. I am the better able to do this from having lived in town, where I was regularly supplied with all the fruits, roots, vegetables, poultry, eggs, pork, and also goat and kid, by the negro slaves, and from having walked again and again over the provision-grounds of estates. By these means I saw the whole system fully and experimentally developed. The slave may be perfectly idle, and yet he is supported. The British labourer strains every nerve to live. The slave is provided for without anxiety on his part; the object he has in view is not to live, but to save, and get rich. A wife and family are often a serious burden to the British labourer; and, in order to support them, he is frequently obliged to seek pecuniary aid from the parish. A wife and family are the greatest possible advantage to a slave, for his master supplies them with every thing: his wife washes and cooks, the children soon begin to assist the mother, and they all work in their garden and grounds, and reap a great annual crop of different kinds.

I shall now go on to describe the daily fare of the estates' negroes, beginning with the head people—that is, drivers, boiler-men, coopers, carpenters, masons, &c. These have their breakfast boiled generally the preceding evening. The mess consists of green plantains, eddoes or yam, made into soup, with an abundance of creole peas or beans, or the eddoe leaf, the calialou, or perhaps a plant which grows indigenous, and particularly among the canes; it is known by the name of weedy-weedy; I never could learn that there was any other appellation for it: it also nearly resembles spinach. This soup is seasoned with salt fish, and occasionally, as a change, with a bit of salt pork. The soup is boiled very thoroughly, and forms a substantial mess, being of the consistency of thick potatoe soup. It is well spiced with country peppers; and cooked, as they cook it, is a most excellent dish indeed. All the various soups, whether tanias, calialou, pigeon pea, or pumpkin, are to be found almost daily at the tables of the white population, whose children

are almost fed upon those messes. I never met with an European who did not relish all the different creole soups, or, as they are often called, "negro pot."

Dinner is not a regular meal with them: a roasted yam, or plantain, and a bit of salt fish roasted on the coals with it, is their repast between twelve and two, which are their dinner hours.

The wives of the head people eat the same breakfast, &c. with the husband; for, although he may have many wives, yet there is only one who regularly lives with him, and manages the household. The children, if in the young gang, breakfast with the parents; and the children of such people get soup, along with roasted yam, a plantain, or sweet cassada. At noon-time they get farine, cassada, plantain cake, or roasted corn, &c. The drink of all such families of a morning is either melasses, syrup, or sugar and water; and, during crop-time, they often take, and may always have, hot liquor, which is the hot cane juice, before it begins to thicken and

attain the consistency of syrup. When head people conduct themselves properly, they have an allowance of rum given them, sufficient to mix them a glass or two of weak grog daily.

Supper is their chief meal, and their soup, although the principal dish, is not the only one: they often have tum-tum—made of plantains boiled quite soft, and beat in a wooden mortar,—it is eaten like a potatoe pudding; at other times the plantain, after being beaten soft, is made up into round cakes, and fried. Ripe plantains roasted is another dish, but they are best sliced and fried, and, indeed, are superior to apple fritters. Pigeon peas, stewed with a little bit of salt fish or salt pork, with the addition of country peppers and sweet herbs, is another supper dish. In fact it would require almost a volume to enumerate all their different modes of dressing their provisions. Sweet cassada, roasted, is excellent; and when they kill a hog, which they all do three or four times a year, besides the pigs which they sell, they keep the head of the hog, and dress it in

the following manner:—The head and feet being cleaned, and made quite white, they are boiled until soft in strong salt and water, or, if near the sea, in sea water. The meat is then picked off the head, and, being cut up in small pieces, it is placed, along with the feet, in a deep vessel; and, when cold, immersed in water well salted, lime juice sufficient to acidulate it, and plenty of country peppers. It will keep good for a week at least, which renders it a very convenient dish. It is eaten cold; and the sauce, with a bit of cassada cake, or farine, soaked in it, is liked by every one. The dish is well known in the West Indies by the name of souse, and is a favourite with all.

Negroes are fond of turtle: it is the cheapest meat in the market, and they occasionally buy it; but it is by no means a favourite dish with the majority of the white population, and many will not eat it. Excepting in November, December, and January, negroes have plenty of eggs: they rarely or ever eat them, but sell them at three and four for fourpence sterling:

in the scarce season they are sometimes as dear as twopence a-piece. These they often barter for food, such as fresh or corned fish. Jack-fish they are very fond of.

All negroes understand well the composition of sausages; and although they most commonly dispose of them, I have often had sausages made a present of to me by different slaves. Their poultry is so abundant, that they do not grudge, upon any little merry-making, to kill a few fowls and roast them; and they occasionally make fowl soup, with a bit of salt pork added. Fresh meat, without something salt to eat along with it, has no charms for a negro.

The common field negro has not soup so often for breakfast as the head people. A roasted yam or plantain, or farine with lime juice, salt, and pepper, satisfies him; followed by some sweet, and generally hot beverage, as drink. Generally speaking, his dinner and supper will be found little, if at all inferior, to the head people's; but he has not grog so often as they have, whose work, particularly that of the

boiler-men, is more severe. Few negroes think of cleaning and washing the pans they cook in, or the dishes or calibashes they eat out of. These are almost always left uncleaned until required again. The same practice obtains in a gentleman's kitchen; and it is in vain to expect to find any utensil clean when required. Negroes have always plenty of fuel: when they go to their grounds they bring down a load, twice generally, each day they are there. Occasionally during the week they are permitted to go up and bring down wood, and see that all is right in their provision grounds.

Children who are too young to be employed, are all brought up by women, whose sole office is to take care of them. The elder children look after those who are younger; while the nurse, at other times, makes them pick a little wood to boil their victuals with. They return to their parents at night, but not until then. Their food is given by the manager to the nurse, and consists of a good breakfast of either well boiled soup, or at times rice, boiled

with a little sprig of salt fish, or else boiled down to a thick gruel with sugar. Sucking infants have either arrow root or flour pap, and at times bread boiled to pap, and sweetened. Many estates get out oatmeal for the use of the youngest children: the sick negroes also are very fond of gruel sweetened with sugar. Oatmeal forms also excellent food for the children who are too young to eat the creole soups. There is always a plantain walk, with plantains, yams, and other provisions, for the use of the children in the nursery, and for the sick or aged. Such children have creole soup well boiled, generally with fish; but for a change occasionally, with Irish mess, beef, or pork, which is in store upon every estate for the purpose. They have soup again at dinner, and generally roast plantains, yams, sweet cassada, &c. At different times of the day, when they deserve it, they have sugar or melasses and water for drink. The woman who has the care of them, keeps them together all day in a building appropriated for them,

out of the sun. It is her business to keep them clean, and to see that no chigres are permitted to remain on their feet, so as to produce sores.* These women are far kinder to the children than I ever knew any of the negro mothers to be, and the infant invariably shews more affection for the nurse than for its parent. I have seen a negro nurse quite proud of her little charges,—teaching them to make a curtsy, and answer politely; and she always keeps them good humoured, by dancing and singing to them. The arrangement of the children upon a West Indian estate is most gratifying, for every want and comfort is minutely attended to; in case of sickness, they are handed over to the nurse or nurses in the hospital.

Negro children are brought up altogether

* Chigres are a sand flea, which penetrate under the skin of the feet, but particularly the toes. As soon as they accomplish this, an itching sensation is felt, when the chigre ought to be removed by means of a needle breaking the skin. No uneasiness follows; but should this precaution be neglected, the insect breeds in the toe, and produces sometimes dreadful sores.

differently from European infants; and however strange the mode may appear, I have seen such fine healthy robust infants treated in the way I am about to describe, that I feel no hesitation in believing it to be perfectly adapted to the climate. The mother, unless in cases where sickness prevents, always suckles her own child. For the first fortnight the nurse gives it no spoon food,—but from that time it gets two meals a day, of arrow root, or pap of some kind or other. Every third or fourth day she gives it a tea-spoonful of castor oil, and bathes it morning and evening in cold water. After completely immersing it two or three times in the water, the nurse takes the baby, and holding it by the right leg only, she suspends it thus for about a second; she then suspends it by the left leg, next by the right arm, then by the left one, shaking each joint apparently very roughly; and last of all taking the infant, she throws it up into the air, catching it very adroitly. They consider this the best and only method of making the baby's joints firm and

supple. At first the child cries when this operation is performed, but it soon becomes used to it, laughs and enjoys it amazingly. If an infant cry after it has been for some time washed in this way, they say, "he good for noting at all, he coward too much." Every mother has time allowed her in the morning to wash, dress, and suckle her infant—that is, when she again returns from her confinement to work. The nurse keeps the baby, and attends upon the mother from three to four weeks, as may be requisite. One or more nurses are required for the estate, according to the number and ages of those in the nursery.

At five or six months' old these children all eat the creole soup, even pretty well seasoned with country peppers. A negro mother would think it downright starvation if you were to deny her child salt fish; and it is quite common to see a little child of a few months old, sucking a great piece of fish or salt pork. I have often tried negro children with fowl soup, but I never found that they could be persuaded to

eat it. Infants are never weaned before they are fifteen or sixteen months, and rarely so early: they are often great robust children, following their mother all over the estate before they are weaned.

Old negroes rarely or ever live alone, and are never at a loss for some one to cook for them. If they have a god-child resident upon the estate, they always perform this duty: their allowances of food are the same as the working people. Should they be so infirm as no longer to be able to cultivate their provision-grounds, they get some of the young people to do this; whom they pay for their trouble, not in money, but in a given portion of the produce of their grounds. These old people are always fond of rearing poultry; and I have known many who were so bent down with old age as never to stir fifty yards from the door of their dwelling, raise great numbers of fowls of all kinds.

Such people are always treated with much kindness, and they are often employed in getting rice, oatmeal, and plantain from the plantain

walk; or something to make them comfortable in their old age. I have frequently visited invalids and aged slaves; and I never found one who was not comfortably housed, clothed, and well provided with food; neither can I recollect, with the exception of one, any instance where they did not manage, in some way or other, to make a little money, and this one had made money when young. At Christmas, Irish mess, beef, flour, or rice, sugar and rum are served out. At this season, all head people receive, 3lbs. of pork, 8lbs. of flour or rice, two quarts of sugar, and a bottle of rum. Head domestics receive the same; and although it is optional, yet there are few, if any of these people who do not also get some Madeira and porter to add to their good cheer. It is very common also at Christmas to kill an ox, when a portion of fresh animal food is distributed. Field people have 4lbs. of pork, 4lbs. of flour, two quarts of sugar, and a bottle of rum. Children under twelve years of age have half allowance; above that age, they have the same as the full

grown people. The women and children prefer receiving sugar instead of rum. Serving out the Christmas provisions is a time of great merriment; the negroes powder each other over with flour, and there is a complete scene of romping among the young people.

It is not easy to give a description of the food provided for the sick, for their diet must depend upon the nature of the disease; but neither trouble nor expense is spared to procure the very best for them, and the quantity of fowls and chickens purchased for the sick is enormous. There is often a great deal of wine used, besides porter. Rice, arrow root, sago, and bread, are all articles commonly used in the hospital; but should the proprietor be resident, the invalids are very often fed from his table, and their victuals at all events cooked in the master's kitchen.

There was nothing surprised me more than the liberality with which the convalescent slaves are treated; and any comparison between their comforts, and the comforts of the labouring

classes in Britain, mutually circumstanced, would be absurd. Before going abroad, I had lived a good deal in the country, and was pretty accurately acquainted with the comforts enjoyed by ploughmen and their families, in counties nearly adjoining to Edinburgh, and also by the lower classes in that city. Since I returned to England, I have made many inquiries upon this subject, and the result of the investigation has left no doubt in my mind of the superior comforts hitherto enjoyed by slaves, most particularly during sickness and convalescence. Should a slave be unable, from bad health or any other cause, to work his provision-grounds, another negro is always appointed by his master to cultivate them for him; so that the slave is never permitted to be a sufferer, should he be laid aside by indisposition.

In St. Vincent, provision-grounds near town are not so productive in proportion as those farther from Kingstown, where the estates have not been so long under cultivation. The soil of the latter is very fertile,—producing amazing

crops, with hardly any labour, particularly those in the Charaib country. The negroes on those estates have occasionally the use of their proprietors' drogher (a small vessel for conveying sugars to Kingstown to be shipped for England), to carry their plantains to town for sale; and also the carts to bring them from the grounds to the beach. This I have heard many Charaib country negroes describe: their plantains are separately marked by the manager, who when he is in town receives the payment, and upon his return gives it to the people. I have known a manager receive at one time 270*l.* sterling for the surplus plantain crop of the slaves, besides what they personally consumed and gave to their hogs. This was an estate too where there was no resident proprietor; and the manager nevertheless took quite as great an interest in the well-being of the negroes, as if they had been his own people. Such instances as these are continually occurring, and it is right that they should be known to the world.

Slaves upon those estates which are situated in the neighbourhood of a colonial town, have many ways of making money which those who are distant from a town do not possess. English vegetables, and Guinea grass in particular, yield great profits. Guinea grass grows very readily, and a small bundle sells for twopence. A horse requires six of these bundles in the twenty-four hours, besides oats three times a day. All the families resident in Kingstown, have their horses supplied with Guinea grass, from the negroes belonging to the estates in Kingstown valley. Many also of the slaves cut and sell wood, which is worth thirteen pence per bundle, while others deal in charcoal. Their dealing in the latter article is, however, strictly forbidden by law. Still the negroes persist in it; and whenever it appears in the market, it is impossible to tell whether the charcoal was made from wood, stolen by a slave, or whether it was made by free negroes, who lawfully purchased the wood wherewith to make it.

It is sometimes necessary to remove the provision grounds upon an estate; but six months' warning is always given, and the produce of the new ground is in season before they quit the old ones. Such removal happens very rarely—perhaps not once in twenty or thirty years; but still when it does occur, it is done with perfect justice to all parties. There cannot be a remark more devoid of truth, than that the property of slaves is not respected, for I have abundant evidence that the reverse is the case. In the event of death, they understand very well who is the legal heir or heirs, failing all blood relations, when the god-child or god-children succeed. I have always observed that there was the greatest accuracy and attention in regard to those points; and strange as it may appear, considering what notorious thieves negroes are, they are not prone to steal from the house of the deceased, though it is often the custom for the proprietor or manager to lock up the effects of a slave, unless the heir be upon the spot to receive them. I recollect,

not very long after I had been in the West Indies, a young female domestic of ours asked permission to go to an estate full twenty miles off; adding that her god-father was dead, and they had sent for her to get what he had left, for he had no other one, as she expressed it, "to own it." I had heard it in England so constantly asserted, that the property of slaves was not respected, and that the proprietor or manager, in the event of their death, claimed all, that when she told me this story, I gave no credit to it; but, upon applying to her master, he informed me it was like most other home stories—without a shadow of truth. The servant, therefore, was permitted to go, and returned the third day with ostensible proofs of her being indeed the heir; for she led an immense pig along with her, and had a large quantity of yams. The other property, being rather more bulky than she could readily remove, she sold upon the estate; and had, as she said, got some "leetle ting" (some money) for it. She had not, however, been proof

against the charms of a scarlet waistcoat, which she brought home with her as too pretty an article of dress to part with. Negro slaves have no idea that any one would or could doubt their legal right to their own property; they often sell provisions without receiving the payment until it amounts to a certain sum; and they rather prefer taking a few dollars at one time. Indeed those slaves who sell Guinea grass are seldom or ever paid oftener than once a week, and frequently only once a month. Were their rights as men not respected, they would act very differently; but they know by experience that there is not a white person who does not, both practically and theoretically, consider a debt due to a slave as much his bounden duty to pay, as if it had been contracted to a white or coloured free person.

I recollect a female domestic who died in our house. She was a young woman of indifferent character, and had had several husbands, but would never settle—always idle, and a great runaway. She left no children; and upon her

death-bed, her elder sister took undisturbed possession of her wardrobe; for that was her all, as she had been so indifferent and indolent a character. None of her former husbands claimed her property, and her sister took it. On all these subjects negro slaves are by no means ignorant as to how they ought to act: they are perfectly aware of their rights, and have undisturbed possession of them.

I trust my readers are convinced that negro slaves have abundance of food; and that, although it is different from the usual victuals of either English, Scotch, or Irish working people, it is wholesome and nutritious. This I can assert, that negroes greatly prefer it to the common food of the working classes of Great Britain. I have often tried, and never yet found one negro who liked an English potatoe; and I have often seen them put them aside, when they had been left from their master's table, or throw them to the fowls or pigs, expressing astonishment that any one could eat them.

Slaves, who are domestics to families in town, have money instead of their allowances;—none have less than half a dollar, and none more than a round dollar, weekly. They always have two meals a day from table, so that the greater part of this allowance is saved. Servants also have their clothes washed, or if females, the materials for washing allowed them. They have candles also; and as they cook in their master's kitchen, they are at no expense for fuel. They get a little sugar daily for beverage, and a head man servant either has his grog daily, or a bottle of rum weekly. All negroes prefer having provision-grounds, for by them they make much more than a dollar weekly. Town servants very frequently keep pigs; and there are none who do not rear poultry, there being always some court-yard about the servants' houses.

Negro servants have all a great turn for barter, and readily perceive any opportunity of turning it to advantage. I recollect B——, (whom I have more than once mentioned) going

down to Trinidad: when he returned, I happened to go into his house an hour or two after, when I saw a cloth full of blue for washing. I inquired of his wife what she was going to do with such a quantity of blue; when she informed me that B—— had bought it in the market, at *Port au Spain*, for two dollars and a half, but it would sell in Kingstown market for four dollars: and some time after, when he made a second visit to Trinidad, he brought up more than twice as much of the same article, and also a quantity of starch, and he gained a very good profit. But upon an estate, negroes are so accustomed to receive the necessaries of life, without even thinking of them, that they feel more independent in that than in any other situation; although pride operates so powerfully upon some of them, that to be called a head-servant is a great attraction, as adding to their consequence.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE NEGRO POPULATION.

Diseases incident to the negroes, and treatment of the sick.

THERE is upon every estate a hospital for the reception of the sick, and a sick nurse, or nurses, as may be requisite. The hospital is a long building, divided into three parts, with a gallery in front, raised some feet from the ground. The centre room is a place of confinement, where the stocks are kept; and the side rooms are so appropriated, that the males and females have separate apartments. There is either a small room also for the medicines, or the medicines are kept by the manager.

A medical attendant visits the estate twice every week; but in cases of sickness, his attendance is not limited, and if requisite he visits two or three times a day. Negroes have more imaginary diseases than any set of people I ever was amongst: they are fond of quackery, and often defeat the whole treatment of their medical attendant by taking nostrums of their own. A negro must be made to swallow physic, as you would make an infant swallow it,—if I except castor oil, which some of them like so much, that they will steal it to fry fish and plantains with. Monday morning is always a great day for the sick; all lazy or ill-disposed negroes come into the hospital at least once a week, and sometimes oftener.

It is only those who have lived in the West Indies, who can fully understand the scene presented by three or four domestic negroes, coming up of a morning, with their heads tied up, their eyes half shut, dragging one leg after the other, and groaning as if they were in agony; seeing such a party present itself at

your door, you begin with "Well, what is the matter with you?" "Misses, my kin (skin) da hurt me—me bad too much—me eye turn in me head:" this is followed by another long and grievous howl. Probably the pulse is good, no fever, the tongue clean, skin cool; upon such occasions, too, you will find the appetite excellent. We had one or two servants who made a regular custom of being indisposed weekly: medicine they would not take, the doctor they would not see; I had tried every plan I could invent, but they baffled me completely, until I tried what laughing them out of it would do. I was perfectly aware that it was laziness, and I thought ridicule might succeed: I merely used to say, "Well, to-morrow of course you will be sick; one or two days every week you know you must have to amuse yourself." Their fellow servants seconded me in this new mode of treatment; and in a very short time it cured them so completely, that they never attempted to repeat the trick, for it was in fact nothing else.

Negroes who are of good character do not conduct themselves in this way; although perhaps, with hardly an exception, it will be found that they make more ado about a head-ache, or any trivial complaint, than a white person would do. They are a muscular, robust set of people; I never saw any of them injured by heat, nor did I ever hear them complain of it. They feel cold indeed, much more even than the white creole; and look most miserable beings on a chilly day, when they cover themselves well with their woollen dress, and come to their masters for a glass of rum, as in their opinion the best preventive against cold.

Negroes are very erect, and are well formed. Their bodies are uncontrolled by tight clothes in infancy and childhood, and probably to this may be attributed their being so much freer of deformities than the population of Britain. After more than five years' residence in the West Indies, I cannot recal to my memory an instance of one deformed child, or indeed of any grown person whose shape was not free

from glaring defect. I never saw but one blind negro; and he, although blind to his master, and able to do nothing for him, could build a house for himself, and plant provisions. I have seen three negroes with only one leg each, and I remember one who had lost both—each of these men had lost their limbs by amputation; the one who had lost both, had suffered by not picking the chigres out of his feet until they bred sores, which spread over both his legs; and as he would not allow the requisite care, gangrene took place, and nothing but amputation saved his life.

By far the most common diseases of the negro, are slight disorders of the stomach: before the canes are ripe, but when they are old enough to be full of sweet juice and palatable enough, the negroes are fond of them: they have been a considerable time without the cane, and as soon as they find them in this state, they relish them as a change; but no sooner do they eat them, than they become affected with disorders in the stomach, more or

less severe according to the quantity eaten. An unripe cane is equally pernicious with unripe fruit; and produces nearly the same bad consequences. At that season many negroes are very seriously indisposed from this cause; but there is no preventing them from committing the indiscretion.

Pleurisy is a disease of frequent occurrence among the negroes; but the prompt treatment which is always had recourse to, seems very successful, for a death seldom or ever is heard of from this malady. Fevers from colds, very similar to influenza, are common in the rainy season; but they are not so long in duration as they are in a northern climate; in three or four days a cold is quite gone. The patient generally lies in bed, and drinks gruel, tamarind beverage, or lemonade, and in a week is again able to work.

It always appeared to me that every one in the island, but more particularly the negroes, were liable to boils; probably the appetite for salted food is in a great measure the cause of

this,—for fresh food is, after a time, almost loathed in a tropical climate; and is peculiarly disagreeable to the taste of a negro. But although subject to boils, and other bad cutaneous eruptions, I never saw or heard of a case of scrofula. The cutaneous diseases to which negroes are subject, originate not unfrequently from the mosquito bite, which, if indiscreetly irritated, produces very often unpleasant consequences. I do not hesitate to say that the attention to negroes in sickness, is beyond all praise, no personal trouble, time, nor expense are spared; and the sort of kindness shewn by a slave proprietor towards his sick negro, is a kindness involving much personal fatigue, and many *désagremens*. These are no sentimental scenes of benevolent sensibility; but the regular dirty drudgery of an apothecary's apprentice, often without the soothing consolation of gratitude from the patient, or the approbation of the society in which one lives. The colonists have only one reward—and that is, that although reviled and slandered by those who know them

not, they have still the consciousness of doing their duty. I do not mean to assert, however, that all negroes are incapable of gratitude, although the greater number consider the personal attentions of their master and mistress as their right, and view it in no other light.

Of all the diseases to which negroes are liable, none is so difficnlt of cure as the *mal d'etomac;* and as this disease is of great importance, and is extremely curious, from its connexion with dirt-eating, I make no apology for speaking at some length of one or two particular cases. This disease assumes different forms; but in most cases, it is attended by deep depression of spirits, and this not only in adults, but in young subjects. The first case I saw was in J——, a boy of about six years of age, the son of L——: she had been a very indifferent character, never at work; she was, however, very positive in her determination of curing this child. The first day I saw him, he was sallow, all the clear black hue of his skin was gone; he did not complain, and when urged to

tell if he felt pain any where, he said he had none. I had him constantly near us, and saw him eat his victuals every day; I tried him with bread and butter and tea for breakfast; but after the second morning he would not eat it: he begged hard for a little bit of salt fish, and this he got; and by the help of this he ate fully half a pound of bread for breakfast, and drank a basin of tea. The medical gentleman who saw him was desirous that he should eat as little salted food as possible. I had chicken soup made for him, but his stomach revolted at it; and he begged for plantain soup with fish, or a little bit of pork. Boiled chicken was next tried,—but this he also refused; so that it became impossible to get him to take any food but the usual negro fare, which I therefore had cooked as carefully as possible, and of these messes he ate a prodigious quantity,—he seemed to have an unnatural appetite: but, to my astonishment, one day, I caught him at his mother's door with his mouth and hands full of earth, which he was eating greedily.

Proper medicines were given to him, and he was watched very minutely; but he was as cunning as a fox, and if your eye was off him for one minute, he was sure to have his mouth full of earth. In less than a month his appetite declined; and, excepting a little wine and biscuit, he ate nothing. His mother, however, persisted, that if he were in the country he would be quite well; and, as neither medical aid nor any care had produced the smallest good effect (for he was daily wasting away), she was allowed to take him to a short distance. Here no improvement took place,—his face swelled, difficult breathing began, and he died in about two months from the time he first looked ill. He never complained of pain, and always said he had none; he was listless, and slept, or rather dozed, twenty hours out of the twenty-four; there was no possibility of amusing him, or making him smile; he cared for nothing, and used to recline all day with his eyes half shut. He was the third remove by both father and mother from African descent,—he had

never worked in his life, for his illness commenced just at the period when otherwise some little employment would have been found for him. His mother, I know, had whipt him; but I do not think she was inclined to be so severe upon her child as most negresses are.

The next case I saw was M.; she was a native African. She also looked sallow; and as soon as it was perceived, every aid was afforded her. In about three weeks she contracted a bad cough, food was disagreeable to her, and a little port wine was her only support; she was deeply depressed. I asked her if she was unhappy,—but she constantly said, she had nothing to make her uneasy, "only misses, da cough hurt me head too much." She never was confined to her bed, but expired very suddenly, without apparently being worse. She, too, had latterly been in the habit of eating dirt, and used to tell A. that she wished she could, but indeed she could not, help it.

L——, the mother of the boy above mentioned, died very suddenly of *mal d'etomac:*

she loathed all sorts of food, and literally screamed for rum and water, or wine, but rum she preferred. Her pulse was very quick, her cough frequent, and the doctor forbad her tasting wine or spirits: arrow-root and sago were tried, but in vain: she got rapidly worse. I saw her take her medicine several times every day: she became much depressed, and said "she was sure she would go dead." I tried every method to soothe her and keep up her spirits, but she declined rapidly; and it was after she had been confined about three weeks that I discovered her eating the wood of her bedstead, tearing it off in splinters, chewing it, and swallowing it greedily.—She seemed half ashamed of it, but it would have been of no use to have spoken to her on the subject. She continued to suffer much from cough, and pain in her chest, and also complained of nausea. Her death was sudden, for she was not ill more than five or six weeks; and, the last day of her life she was not worse than before: she was all at once seized with a violent fit of coughing,—

I raised her up in bed, but in vain; she struggled dreadfully, and died in agony, after about twenty minutes. Both her medical attendant and her fellow servants considered her disease *mal d'etomac.* She was two generations removed from the native African, and about 28 years of age.

N—— also died of *mal d'etomac:* he was attacked by nausea and vomiting; he could retain no sort of food, nor even wine, upon his stomach; he ate dirt, and was given to occasional excess in drinking; he was from the first confined to his bed, and died suddenly, in three weeks from the first attack. O—— was attacked by *mal d'etomac,* in his infancy. I never saw any one eat dirt as he did; I have seen him sweep all the dry dust round the servants' houses into a heap, and then actually lie down and put his mouth to it, licking it up as if it had been the greatest delicacy. Medicine he had of every description; fresh food and salt food—every thing was tried; but nothing short of bodily confinement

could prevent him eating dirt. The effect of whipping was tried upon him, but this produced no change; he was then brought beside us to eat, and I saw him devour an amazing quantity of good soup three times a day; but the moment he thought no one saw him, he returned to his habit; and if he could not get dry earth, he used to pull up the grass, and shaking the earth that was attached to the roots, put it into his mouth, as any other child would have done with sweetmeats. He was depressed and melancholy, yet he had all his wants supplied; and said he felt no pain: he never joined in the sports of the other children, but sat with his head reclined upon his hand, in a continual doze, and you had to ask the same question repeatedly before he was sufficiently roused to give an answer. He had no want of appetite, and was very fond of fruit; this, however, was not thought good for him, but he used to steal it at every possible opportunity. His mother seemed to dislike him, and therefore he was not much with her; but, in fact, he seemed to care

for no one: if any of the other negro-children teased him, he used to fight, and with a good deal of bitterness, too. When I arrived in St. Vincent, he was about six years of age, and I never could perceive him much better or worse, during the time I was in that colony, nor upon his removal to Trinidad, where he at length died, being attacked by convulsions. His father was a negro, and his mother a coloured woman; the former a native of Dominica. I had heard at home that dirt-eating was occasioned by the longing of the native African to return to his own country; but I have had abundant proof of the absurdity of this opinion, for the disease is by no means so common in the native African, as in the negro who is a creole of the West Indies, and it is not unknown as a disease among coloured people; besides which, it is not confined to the slave population, for free negroes have often died from it; it is, therefore, a most mistaken idea, that slavery has anything to do with it. I saw still more of this disease when I resided in Trinidad, and

only one of the cases there was an African negro. In by far the greater number of instances it is a fatal disease, and I cannot conceive anything so melancholy as the appearance of some of those I have seen labouring under it. There is no doubt that the mind is affected by it; but there are many diseases to which Britons are liable, of which melancholy is a marked symptom also.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NEGRO POPULATION.

Instruction of the negroes—Details of an attempt at private instruction—Wesleyan missions, and their results—Dancing—Change in the character and conduct of the negroes—A negro's idea of freedom.

It is a commonly received opinion in Britain, that negroes are professed idolaters; but the fact is, that negroes are, although very ignorant on the subject of religion, much better informed than is generally supposed. There is not a trace of idol worship among them. I never could hear of one instance of an adult negro who was not baptized: there are, indeed, some young children who are not baptized; and it must be recollected, that it is sometimes hazardous to

bring a child twenty or more miles for this purpose; but whenever there is a clergyman near, numbers come forward to have their infants baptized. I am convinced there is not a negro, old or young, who could not tell that one God made the world and created mankind; and that He is all-powerful and all-seeing. Such questions as these I have proposed a hundred times to negroes of all classes, as well as to children, and I have always received a distinct and intelligent answer, in their own dialect. Negroes, therefore, are not idolaters.

Negroes of decent habits (and here I use decent in their sense of the word, meaning a good negro), say their prayers every evening; and he is considered a very bad negro who omits this: many say their prayers morning and evening, and several have regular family-prayer, at which others attend, as well as the negroes of their own family. All tolerably good negroes can say the Lord's Prayer, and many can repeat the Creed. They all know the sin of swearing, lying, theft, &c. Some few negroes can read,

but the number is very small who possess this advantage. Strange as it may seem, I never asked a negro if he knew who was God's Son, (or the Redeemer of mankind), that he could answer:—"Me never know 'bout him," was the universal answer. I have put this question to dozens of negroes of all ages, who were in the habit of attending the Methodist chapel; nay, who had attended for many years with regularity, and yet it appeared that not one of them had ever heard of the Saviour in so plain a way as to convey to him an idea of his Being. Nay, I have met with many of the lower class of coloured people, who were equally ignorant; and it was witnessing this total ignorance of the most important of all truths that led me to the conviction that religious instruction had not hitherto been conveyed to the negro in a sufficiently plain form, else they must have known who was the Son of God.

As soon as I perfectly understood the negro dialect, I commenced a regular system of instruction with our domestics; not, however,

making it a matter of compulsion. I had twenty under tuition at different times; but I never mustered more than from ten to fourteen at once. One only could read a little: he was a head-servant, not in my family, but he was ambitious of learning; he had many good points in his character, but I knew his character for truth and honesty was not better than that of his neighbours'—yet even this man knew not the name of a Redeemer. The rest were all in the habit of attending the Methodist chapel; but they were just as ignorant as he was. I will not detail the system of instruction which I pursued with my negroes, in leading their minds from the simple apprehension of a God, to the truths of the Gospel, and the comprehension of a Saviour; but when I announced to my hearers the latter truth, tears streamed down the cheeks of not a few of them. But I would warn all who instruct negroes, not to calculate too much upon the impression made at such a time: those who do not calmly reflect, are apt, from such a circumstance as this,

to say, "look at the poor negro; he listens with tears of joy to the glad tidings of salvation; and only see with what apathy, not to say opposition, such a doctrine is often received in Britain:"—but it is not a fair comparison; to the savage there is, as it were, a new world opened upon him; and it is the feeling of surprise, more than heartfelt conviction of his own condition and the merits of Christ, that is the cause of his tears. I mention this, because I was myself much misled from inexperience, by witnessing the great emotion that many negroes testified at first upon hearing such subjects; but when I saw that it did not effect their practical conduct in the slightest degree, I of course was aware that it was merely a passing ebullition of feeling. Any one instructing savages, ought to insist much upon practical duties,—"he who loveth Me, keepeth my commandments:" these, and many such plain and short sentences, I taught them to repeat.

I cannot help mentioning a singular notion entertained generally by negroes, which I have

heard expressed many times. It was while speaking of the resurrection of Lazarus, that one of the negroes interrupting me, said, "Misses, we all come live again, after we go dead." "Yes," said I, "at the resurrection,—that is, the last day of the world, when every one shall be raised from the dead, and appear before God, as judge." "Yes, misses," replied the negro, "me know that; we go dead one day, next day we bury in a coffin, *the third day we shiver in a coffin*, and den we go dead again till all de world come quite done." I need scarcely say that I endeavoured to remove this belief, but I found it to be almost an universally received opinion among negroes. From religious instruction, I went on to teach my pupils to read. I began all of them with the letters: but some of them, who were adults, were so impenetrably dull, as to defy the possibility of teaching them to read: two adults, however, who knew not a letter when they began, read a little, so as to understand, in three months; and the one who knew a little previously, got

on still quicker;—all these three could, by attention, read a little of the Bible. The children were clever, and learnt fast, but forgot very readily. Negro children are, indeed, peculiarly heedless,—I say peculiarly, because there are few children who are not so, more or less; but I have taught children, both in the lower and higher ranks of life at home, to read; and although I cannot say that the negro children were by any means behind in natural ability, yet they were deficient in attention, far beyond that of any children I ever met with; they are never done with tricks; and unlike a white child in the same rank of life, my presence was not the slightest restraint to the most ridiculous conduct; so that invariably while I taught one, the others began a thousand drolleries, which no reproof from me could restrain. Indeed, I never saw a young negro, who possessed the slightest feeling of modesty or shame.

I was desirous to try anything but whipping; so I used to have every night something nice to

give them for supper, and when they behaved ill, I merely withdrew the reward; but it had little or no effect. The elder ones behaved more attentively; but the want of decorum was still so great, that had not the men withdrawn themselves voluntarily, I should have found it necessary to dismiss them; for they became latterly so forward, so presuming, and impudent, that I had made up my mind that it was no longer a duty to instruct those who conducted themselves in a manner so devoid of all decorum,—knowing as they did the impropriety of it; for it was an evil that increased, and every succeeding day there was less and less respect, until they became tired of learning, and told me "they would not learn any more." I still continued to teach the children regularly; but they got very weary of it, and when I attempted to explain anything to them, they used to squat down on the floor, and sleep.

I believe novelty at first made them willing to attend; but when this charm was gone, they preferred sleeping away the evening. I think,

had I instructed them without referring to practical duties, as incumbent upon those who meant to lead a new life and become really Christians, they would not have left off attending; but so soon as I knew they were sufficiently instructed to be able to follow the only valuable use of religious knowledge, viz. the personal application of it, I used to insist upon this, and they uniformly manifested a great aversion to such doctrine.

When I found them stealing, lying, or acting cruelly to each other, I took them aside, and endeavoured kindly to point out to them their sin, as hateful in the sight of God,—that they knew this, and that God would judge them by the knowledge they now possessed: it is hardly to be expressed how they disliked such a mode of correction, and indeed they told me that they "would rather be flogged as be teased so." But I had a great aversion to corporal punishment; and was most desirous that an appeal to the feelings, aided by moral and religious instruction, should enable us to banish all such debasing methods.

On these principles I proceeded, and followed them up practically,—but I failed completely in success, until our servants were justly considered the pest of the neighbourhood; for they became so bold (knowing that they would be exempt from corporal punishment), that their conduct became insupportable, and beyond all comparison more practically wicked than when I began to instruct them. B. and one or two more, were for a time the most finished hypocrites I ever beheld: they had learnt at chapel to groan, turn up their eyes, and indeed, as well as all St. Vincent negroes, to say "please God" at every sentence. Tell a child to bring a tea-cup from the pantry, and the answer is sure to be, "Yes, misses, please God, I'll do so directly." I did all I could to break them of such expressions, as originating in hypocrisy, and as utterly disgusting in common conversation. I have met with some in Britain, who were of opinion that "if the Lord will" ought to be used upon all occasions; for every thing, say they, is uncertain in this world,—but to use this, or any other similar expression, upon all

occasions, degenerates into the ludicrous, and indeed, becomes irreverence towards the Deity. Suppose, when a mistress of a family orders dinner, that her servant answers, "Yes, ma'am, if the Lord will;" is not such an answer more calculated to excite the risible faculties, than to raise in the mind any recollection of the uncertainty of earthly affairs? It is a thousand pities that the negroes have acquired those hypocritical forms, which considered as they are by the negroes, as the sign of Christianity, stand in the way of their advancement in true religion.

Judging by the conduct of those negroes who were the most regular attendants at the Methodist chapel, I am unwillingly driven to the belief, that the Methodist missions have done little for the cause of true religion, and have rather helped to foster dangerous delusion. The Methodists I fear have done harm; for they have diffused a general feeling among the negro population, that abstaining from dancing, from drinking (a vice, by the way, which

negroes are rarely prone to), and a certain phraseology, which is mere form on their part, is Christianity. Now it would be much better, if the negroes were taught that lying, stealing, cruelty to each other, or the brute creation, slander and disobedience, were sins in the sight of God, rather than level their anathemas against dancing—the favourite, and let me say, the innocent, recreation of the negroes; unless when it trenches, as it sometimes does, upon the sacredness of the Sabbath.

Religion of this kind, is the thing to *take* with the negro: it invokes no self-denial, excepting dancing: and the renunciation of gay clothes, and jewellery: fond as the negroes are of dancing and fine clothes, they are more willing to yield upon these points, than they are to abstain from lying, theft, fighting, cruelty, or slandering their neighbours. It is not my intention to represent the Methodists as approving or disregardless of the sins of lying, theft, &c. I only mean to say, that they insist very much more upon the sin of what they

term " vain amusements and dress," (and here I use the very words of a negro upon this subject), than upon lying, theft, fighting, cruelty and slander. Now the fact is, that the Methodists are not in a condition to know much of the every-day actions of negroes who are slaves; but the noise of dancing is constantly obtruded upon them. The one they see; the other they do not see;—and associating very little with those who alone could give them a true picture of the manners and habits of slaves, they are necessarily, to a great extent, ignorant of the true character, or the necessary management of the slave population.

It was to me a matter of constant regret, during the time that I resided both in St. Vincent and in Trinidad, that there were no missionaries of the Established Church,—men who might have associated with the white population, and have judged of them by personal, not by hear-say knowledge; and who, at the same time that they mixed in general society, might possess the necessary talent of levelling their

ideas to the capacities of the ignorant and uneducated,—men willing to converse familiarly with the negro; willing to gossip—visiting them personally—listening patiently to the recital of long and often very silly quarrels: in short, it requires no usual endowments of piety and talent to be a really useful missionary among the negro population of the West Indies; and there is another no less necessary qualification—a previous knowledge of the world; for if one has only lived at home within the limited sphere of a religious connexion, he is little suited to fill such a situation with prudence, or to be of real benefit to the negro. Such persons, though perhaps truly pious and excellent characters, are possessed of little or no discernment. The first time they see the emotion of a negro, when instructing him in religion, they are in transports of joy; enthusiastically persuaded that they have only to preach, and the bulk of the negroes will believe;—they forget that they are speaking to a people emerging only from a savage state; and that the emotions and feel-

ings of an untutored savage, are not the same as the emotion and feeling of a civilized being, whose passions and emotions are artificially controlled. They know not the quickly passing feelings of a negro; and when they see him shed tears at the history of the sufferings of our Saviour, they too often set him down as a sincere convert, without waiting to see whether his emotion has been of such a nature as to produce any practical revolution in his conduct.

It cannot, I think, be doubted, that the slanders which have long been commonly retailed against the whole white population of the colonies, have originated, in a great measure, from the false impressions received by persons, in themselves perhaps really pious, but totally ignorant of the state of any society at home, except what is generally called "the religious world;" scarcely knowing, and never having had any experience, of that far larger world that lies without. Such persons, on going to the West Indies, find no fashionable "religious world," and are shocked with the aspect of society;

and without taking into consideration the demoralizing effects of a bad system, lay all the evil they see at the door of the white population. No class of persons, I repeat, are so little qualified to judge correctly of the state of the West Indies, as those who at home were confined within their own exclusive religious world. I have heard them speak with lamentation of the hard work of negro domestics, and the little time at their disposal for religious duties; but do such persons know anything of the condition of servants in the fashionable society of England?—if they did, they would surely bewail also the condition of the coachmen, footmen, and ladies' maids,—whose lives are a nightly slavery; but these good men know only the condition of servants in the religious world, and the regular tenor of their lives is the standard by which they judge of the labour of the domestic negro.

Respecting the general religious instruction of the negro population, or rather, the long continued want of it,—I do not blame the pro-

prietors for not imparting knowledge to their negroes: this they could not have generally done; but their error was, in not representing to government the impropriety of keeping such a population without the means of regular religious instruction from the Church of England. But if the proprietors were to blame in not representing this—in the strongest possible light, too—the Church of England was also no less careless in not attending to the spiritual wants of such a body of people. The dissenters saw the error, and availed themselves of the opportunity; and it would be most unjust not to say, that they merit great credit for the wish to dispense the glad tidings of salvation among the negroes: it is only to be lamented, that their zeal has so far exceeded their prudence; and that the missionaries employed, although often pious, and not altogether unlearned, are ignorant of the world and of general literature, and so very unpolished as to render it impossible for them to mix in the good society of the West Indies. It has very commonly been re-

peated, and very generally believed, that the colonists have discouraged, in every way, the instruction of the negroes; I have never seen any opposition thrown in the way of negro religious or other instruction. On many of the St. Vincent estates, the Wesleyan missionaries preached, and had also schools for religious instruction. There is even, if I mistake not, more than one private chapel upon some of the estates, supplied by the Wesleyan Methodist missionaries, *built by the proprietors* of the estates. I am, at all events, certain there is one such, which is regularly so supplied; and although the proprietor be himself a steady and conscientious member of the Church of England, he built this chapel in order to procure regular instruction for his negroes.

I have several times attended evening service in the Wesleyan Chapel, and found the congregation numerous; far exceeding that of the Established Church. Many of the most respectable members of the white population were present; although the majority were always

coloured and black. The congregation invariably listened with attention, and the utmost decorum was uniformly preserved; save and except the too frequent groans and deep sighs, to which I have already alluded.

Although the white and coloured population who attended the Methodist Chapel, were of course, in general, able to understand the discourse, I feel convinced (after having devoted myself a good deal to the instruction of negroes) that the slave population comprehended almost nothing of it.

Our own people always attended, and invariably asserted that they "understood all that the parson told them;" but when I came to examine them upon what they had heard, it was evident that they had not one rational or distinct idea upon the subject, although many of them had attended regularly for years.

The frequent change of the missionaries' stations, seems to me to be very injudicious, for it puts it more in the power of the negro to deceive the missionary, and deprives the mis-

sionary of proof on a most important matter,—namely, the stability of his converts.

It was a subject of constant regret among the St. Vincent proprietors, that there were no Moravian missionaries on that island. They were often mentioned to me by different gentlemen who had been in Antigua, and became acquainted with their general plans of instruction, as much more likely to be of real service than any other sect. I was told that industry and cleanliness were not even excluded from their admonitions; but they inculcated those virtues upon the negroes, both by precept and example; so that even where a real convert was not made, the cause of civilization was advanced. I cannot help adding to this notice of the Wesleyan missions, that the discouragement given to social recreations, and especially to dancing, is far from favourable to their utility. An affectation of austerity is substituted for religion,—and I may state from my own experience, that they were the best behaved and most orderly negroes, who were most constant in

the dance; while the bad and disorderly did not join in social amusement, but went off the estate, either for plunder or other mischief. I have witnessed many negro dances, and they were always conducted with great ceremony and propriety; and I do think, that if a Methodist missionary were to witness a few of such scenes, it might help to disabuse him of some of his prejudices. I therefore again repeat, that it is to be lamented that so much is left to the Wesleyan missionaries, and that the Church should not have been more on the alert in this matter. I am strongly inclined to doubt —however the people in England may be disposed to think otherwise—if the civilization of the negro, whether in a state of slavery or freedom, or his instruction in religion, can ever take place so as to have any extensively beneficial effect without the co-operation of the planters. It appears to me, that the negro is led as much by the white population, as the lower classes in Great Britain formerly were led by the higher. Every circumstance which can

tend to rouse the attention of the higher classes in the West Indies to the subject of religion, would do more ultimate good than any of those methods which some have suggested;—methods indeed, which prove how very ignorant all such people are of the nature of a human being emerging only from a savage state. These opinions, upon which the plans of the religious world are founded, appear so amiable, so christian-like, and latterly have become so fashionable, that it seems temerity almost to assure my readers, that beautiful as all those theories are, they are mere theories, and will not stand the test of practice. I was early tutored in them, and once admired them as much as *they* now do. I acted upon them in the West Indies for some time; and nothing but the actual experience of living among negroes, and teaching them, both during week days and on the Sabbath, has convinced me that the present plans of those who wish to do good, are replete with disappointment and danger.

While upon the subject of instruction, and the tractableness of the negro character, I cannot omit taking some notice of the sensation produced by the rumours that first reached the West Indies on the subject of the abolition of slavery. These rumours were vague and various; and some gave out, that government, not convinced upon the subject, were resolved to appoint commissioners of inquiry, who were coming out to examine into the state of affairs.

A sensation was produced, much like that which I suppose might be produced in any county in England, were it understood that commissioners were appointed to come there, and examine into the proceedings of the justices of the peace, the moral habits of the inhabitants, and their conduct towards their dependents; and also to examine into the internal economy of their estates, and whether they behaved kindly and generously to their work people; and lastly, to examine their servants as to those particulars, and learn whether they had any complaints to make against their masters.

It was generally supposed that this was what the commissioners came out to investigate; and although the planters had no reason to shrink from the investigation, yet that person must be indeed destitute of feeling, if he can calmly look forward to such proceedings without his mind being deeply wounded.

There is nothing more unpleasant than to lie under suspicion, and surely cruelty is a crime of the deepest dye,—therefore deeply as every proprietor of negroes felt the degradation of being suspected of the crimes alleged against him, he also felt satisfaction in having nothing to conceal. It is not my business to say anything here of the opinions of the commissioners: but I am much mistaken if they left the West Indies with precisely the same opinions with which they arrived there; and in particular, if they did not look back upon the Island of St. Vincent as the land of real kindness and hospitality.

Mr. Maddock, the commissioner, whose life unfortunately was sacrificed to the climate of

St. Lucia, left a few lines expressive of his opinion of the society of Trinidad, which were published in the *Port of Spain Gazette* almost immediately after his death, and which will not soon be forgotten.

It says not a little for the liberal sentiments of the population of St. Vincent, that, notwithstanding the sensation produced by the first intelligence of commissioners coming out, nevertheless, when those commissioners did come, they were received with, I think, more kindness than most strangers find in England,—although these may have arrived with letters of introduction more likely, one would imagine, to serve as a better passport, than bearing with them a commission of inquiry. The planters were at this time greatly distressed from the low prices of produce, &c.; but the people upon their estates were very manageable, and, in general, contented and happy. Very few punishments had taken place; and upon many estates there had been no punishment for a series of years, even where there was a large gang of negroes.

I recollect one estate in particular, where, although the negroes were not much under 300, in the space of seven years not one instance of punishment had occurred. Now, if I mistake not, this says much in favour of him who could manage a West Indian estate so; and it also proves that the slaves were contented and happy. Indeed, one had only to walk about the estates in the vicinity of Kingstown—as I was in the habit of doing every morning and afternoon, and see how cheerful the slaves were, to be convinced that the idea of slavery, as a bondage, was the last thought that ever entered their minds.

Although few slaves can read, yet there are many free negroes and coloured people who can, and who do read the English newspapers; and the very memorable debates in parliament upon the subject of slavery soon found their way, in a most distorted and mangled form, to the negroes,—and the effect was instantly visible. There was a total change of conduct: and the behaviour of the negroes to me, said

plainly enough,—take care what you are about, for if you dare to find fault with me, I'll make you smart for it.

Perfect confidence in the slave population I never had felt. Now, however, I experienced very different feelings: for I felt that I was living among people dependent upon me, whom I had every inclination to be kind to and instruct, but who were now determined to be influenced by no treatment, however kind; and who shewed in their every action that they looked upon me, being *their proprietor*, as *necessarily* their enemy. I had acted always, I trust, kindly to the domestic slaves around me: I had daily devoted a certain portion of time to their religious and moral instruction, and I thought I had, to a great extent gained their confidence; but it was gone, as a flash of lightning: and those whom I had done the most for, and who were the most intelligent and best knew their duty, turned out immediately upon the arrival, or indeed a little before the arrival of the commissioners, the most worthless and

disreputable of all characters; and, moreover, so insolent, that I was terrified to make a request to a servant, though I can truly say, I had never used a harsh word in my life to any one of them.

From this moment, all possibility of instructing the slave through the medium of the master, I feared was gone: they now considered all masters as tyrants; and some of them even understood that it was no fault to run off altogether, thus setting all law and good order at defiance.

The negroes from this moment believed that Massa King George had said they were all to be free—a term very differently understood by the negroes and by their advocates on this side of the water. By free, a Briton means that the negro is no longer to be the property of his master, but situated as labourers are in England; that is, he is to work for his own and his family's support, or starve. But the word *free* means quite another thing in the negro sense; for they tell me that it means "there

is to be no massas at all, and Massa King George is to buy all the estate, and gie them to live upon:" for, as they have often added to me—"Misses, what signify *free*, if we have to vorck; if we be to vorck, we just as soon, and sooner, vorck for white massa than any one; white massa deal better than black massa; and, as for slave, that signify noting at all, for if we be to vorck, we're better slave than free, misses." This is the genuine sentiment of not one, but almost all negroes; and freedom to them, without a total exemption from regular work, would not, by the majority, be considered a boon, but the very reverse.

These were, in themselves, great evils for the colonists. The negro's daily work was performed with much more than his usual indolence, and was often altogether neglected: the consequences of such conduct upon estates was necessarily productive of the worst effects—the stock was neglected, and the crops fell short for want of the necessary exertion on the part of the labourer—evils, too, which no kindness

nor reproof could obviate. Neither would any planter, under such uncertainty, venture to begin any improvement, or go on with those commenced; and an estate which might have turned out tolerably well, and be kept out of debt by good management and judicious improvement, was by these unexpected measures, plunged into the greatest distress. The mortgagee at home began also to feel that he could not expect much longer to have any good security for his money; and therefore he felt it prudent to arrange his accounts with the estate as speedily as possible. If the unfortunate proprietor could not come to a settlement, there was only one other method—the estate must be sold for the benefit of the mortgagee; and, as for the proprietor and his family, they must do what they could to procure an uncertain pittance. No one resident in the West Indies can deny the perfect truth of this statement: and from being an eye-witness of such facts, I knew what great cause the planters had to complain. There is hardly a possibility, if a

planter's estate is sold for debt, of his ever again being able to do anything for his family. This must necessarily prey upon the spirits of any honourable man, and many have already fallen untimely victims to it.

These results I have often heard regretted by the negro himself, intoxicated as he was by the wild notions which he had imbibed. It is, indeed, no light thing for negroes to have to part with their master—their own expression is this, "He's a bad massa when we don't find the want of him." To the good negro, a change of master is not agreeable, even although the change should be to a richer, and one equally kind. But it is otherwise with bad characters, who have it in their power to deceive a person who is a stranger still more easily than an old master. I trust that, in the observations I have made, I have not been misunderstood: it is not my intention to reprobate inquiry, still less to defend slavery. But I could not be silent as to the unfortunate results of the injudicious harangues made in parliament from

time to time, and the support given to impracticable theories—dangerous alike to the slave and the colonist—on the part of the Society for the Suppression of Slavery. Deeply have the colonies suffered from the promulgation of wrong-headed plans, and from the intemperate zeal and mistaken kindness of the abolitionists.

CHAPTER X.

Idolatry—Obeah, witchcraft—Negro honesty, and anecdotes—Gentleness—Anecdotes—Affection.

THERE must, I am convinced, be old Africans, who cannot have forgotten such things as the worship of idols, but people seem not to be aware, that in Africa very many negro nations are not idolaters, but Mahometans: this was a subject which I searched into minutely, and I never found one native African who did not positively deny all knowledge of such a thing as idol worship. At the same time I do not doubt, that even if they did remember it, they might have denied it; because native Africans do not

at all like it to be supposed that they retain the customs of their country; and consider themselves wonderfully civilized by their being transplanted from Africa to the West Indies. Creole negroes invariably consider themselves superior people, and lord it over the native Africans.

I never found any who knew the name of Mahomet; but probably if I had known the name in Mandingo, I might have been able to make them understand me better. Several native Africans have told me, that in their country "they went every fourth day to church, to say prayers to one very great Massa, whom the great God sent down into the world a long time back, to teach people to be very good. The great Massa never comed to Africa, but he stop in a country far off from them, where the sun rise." These and similar stories I have received from native Africans. They seemed indignant at the idea that they should be supposed capable of idol worship, and this without one exception; yet many have made no secret of admitting to me, without any disguise, that

their nation ate human flesh; but of this I shall speak more hereafter.

Negroes are superstitious; but I never met with one whose superstition, although different, was at all more absurd than the superstition of many of the lower classes both in England and Scotland.

The Obeah of the negro is nothing more or less than a belief in witchcraft; and this operates upon them to such a degree, as not unfrequently to produce death. There is not perhaps a single West Indian estate, upon which there is not one or more Obeah men or women; the negroes know who they are, but it is very difficult for white people to find them out. The way in which they proceed is this: suppose a negro takes a dislike to a negro or negroes, either upon the same estate with himself or upon another, he goes to the Obeah woman or man, and tells them that he will give money, or something else as payment, if they will Obeah such and such persons. The Obeah (woman) then goes to those people, and tells them that

she has obeahed them: she of course tells them that this is an impulse over which she has no control: slow poison is at times secretly administered, but in by far the greater number of cases the mind only is affected; the imagination becomes more and more alarmed,—the spirits sink,—lassitude and loss of appetite ensue, and death ends the drama.

The practice of Obeah is too common among negroes, and very fatal to them; I knew of an instance where fifteen people, in the course of a few months, died from no other cause. It is in vain to reason with them,—"Misses, I'm obeahed—I know I'll go dead," is all you can obtain from them. Negroes so firmly believe this, that they have bottles hung round and about their houses, and in their grounds, full of some sort of infusion which they prepare to prevent the Obeah from affecting them; they often wear an amulet, or some such thing, as a charm for the same purpose.

The practice of Obeah is death, by the laws of St. Vincent, but there is no possibility of

conviction. Negroes believe that spirits occasionally appear, and that devils, or as they call them, jumbees, are frequently to be seen; nay, that jumbee sometimes compels them to go away with him, and run off from their master; but I rather think they make a convenience of jumbee upon such occasions.

The name is different,—but the truth is, negroes believe in witchcraft; and so do many of the lower orders in Britain. I have seen country servants in the county of Mid Lothian, who were as firm believers in it as any negro can be. I have seen a dairy-maid churn, with the dairy locked, for fear of a man coming in, whose eye she declared would have such an effect as to spoil the butter. I have often reasoned with this woman, who was in all other respects a shrewd, sensible female, for her rank in life; and she never ceased to tell me, that if I disbelieved in witches, I must also disbelieve the Bible: there was no arguing with her; in her opinion, it was sacred ground. Indeed, she was not a solitary instance. I have often heard

the lower classes in Scotland use the same argument. Not long ago a respectable man, in one of the western counties of England, sent to borrow a churn from a lady of my acquaintance; because, as he alleged, "the devil had got into his churn, and he could not make butter in it."

The existence of Obeah by no means implies that negroes are idolaters; for Obeah is only their term for witchcraft,—a belief in which, is not necessarily connected with idolatry.

It appears almost temerity for any one at the present day to attempt to delineate the character of negroes as they really are; for they have been for a length of time described to the world, as beings, although destitute of religion, yet so gentle, so amiable, so inoffensive, so patient under oppression, so affectionate and faithful, even to their tyrants, that had I not lived among them, and found that after all that had been said, this was only a dream of the imagination, I should probably to this moment have believed that Christian virtues exist in a superior degree where Christianity sheds her

dimmest light. But a few years' residence among negroes, went far to lead me to a sounder way of thinking.

The first defect of character which struck me as very marked among negroes, was a love of deceit. The day I landed in the West Indies, I was shocked to see many of our servants so badly clothed, particularly as they informed me that they had no other clothes, not having even a change; and they declared they had not received any for some years. Of course they were soon well clothed; but the females grumbled at the kind of clothing which I gave them, although it was quite as good as any respectable female servant would wish for at home. Shortly afterwards it was ascertained that they had recently received clothing; yet they firmly denied it,—and it was supposed they had sold it,—however, as they still denied having ever received any, no further question was put to them. But about six or eight months after my arrival, B. made his appearance one morning in a new blue cloth jacket.

I said, "Well, B., you have got a nice new jacket; did you buy it ready-made?" for I had not a suspicion how he came by it. "Yes, misses," said B. P., a little fellow who was learning to be a house-servant, burst into a fit of undisguised laughter, and said "*that* what he get from massa, (meaning the attorney), when he down to leeward." B. instantly struck him over the mouth; but the lad owed B. a grudge, and added, "you say so; don't I know my mamma and sissy (sister) hae their bamboo (woollen dresses) too." When I first came amongst them, I told them whatever they wished for, to come to their master or myself, and if we could give them what they desired, they should have it; but I hoped they would not take what did not belong to them without asking permission. I also added, If any accident happen to you, come and tell the truth,—accidents will happen occasionally,—but I shall never find fault with those who tell the whole truth. But it was in vain; nothing that was broken or destroyed was ever mentioned, and

when it was of necessity found out, "no one do it but da ratta" (the rats). In eighteen months they broke a whole set of dinner ware, and it was the rats did the whole!

I have seen negro servants appear with part of my wardrobe, and wear it without fear of detection, or shame at being a thief. A ring of some value, and a silver thimble, which was merely valuable as the gift of a friend whose initials were on it, disappeared; a search was made, every one was asked,—but in vain; no trace of it was to be seen. Their master was so annoyed, that he told them that unless the ring was produced before night, he would have the matter fully investigated, and they would certainly be punished, that is, flogged: the ring therefore was put down on the table of one of the chambers, before the family retired to rest; the thimble, however, was destined to appear on another occasion. The sewing of a mattress having given way, Q——, one of the female servants, came up to sew it: she had on a silver thimble; this I did not wonder

at, for no negro would be so vulgar as to use a thimble of base metal; but I thought I saw initials on it. I said, "Q——, will you be so good as to shew me that thimble for a moment?" The identical initials were upon it.—I asked her how she had got this: "I got it from D——," answered Q. "Do you know where he got it?" "Yes, misses, I seed him buy it; he buyed long afore you comed to St. Vincent, when he lived with the manager, and he gave it to me in change for a bunch of blue and red beads, for he wife H. misses. I'll take the book and swear to it if you misbelieve me." Now it was quite needless for me to reason upon such a point, for the thimble was of a peculiar pattern, which others in the family knew as well as myself, and the initials were there plain enough—yet this woman was actually angry because I would not stop to hear her swear a false oath.

Negro methods of theft defy the most watchful eye. I never went to my store-room that I did not miss some article or other, yet it was

not once in twenty cases that I could discover the thief. I was certain as to missing bottles of Madeira at different times; and though I watched as minutely as I could, yet I never saw one of them removed. The cellar had a double door, with a very strong lock on each door; the windows were secured across with wooden rails, none of these were ever broken or displaced, and as they were old, had they been removed and put in again, it could not have escaped notice. I tried to put a bottle of wine through these bars, but could not succeed; yet it so happened, that returning quickly to the cellar one day after I had left it, I found a bottle of wine, with the neck of it sticking through the bars, and B—— hastily retreating from the spot when he saw me. When I pointed it out to him, he said, "Misses, that be very strange, it must be Jumbee do so." At that time I could not comprehend, or discover how B. or anybody else had got the bottle to the window,—or how, if got there, it could be taken away,—yet I knew that many had disap-

peared; and it was not till I had left St. Vincent, and resided in Trinidad, that I learnt the ingenuity of the thief. I was then told by B.'s fellow servant, that he had a way of putting a string round the bottle when in the cellar without my seeing, and he put the end of the string through the window-bars; and when I was gone, he drew it to the bars, and placing the neck through the bars, he drew the cork, poured out the wine, and then breaking the bottle, carried away the fragments.

B. could pack pretty well, and I employed him the day before I left St. Vincent in packing a case of liquor, and so very clever was he in his mode of deceit, that although I stood by the whole time till the box was packed and the lid nailed on,—after which it was deposited where he had no access to it,—yet when this case was opened, the bottles were found all empty, and they were not the bottles I had given him to put in; for those I gave were French bottles, and the ones he put in were English: now he must have contrived while

wrapping the straw round each bottle, to place an empty English bottle instead of a French full one.

Negroes will steal, cheat, and deceive in every possible way, and that with a degree of adroitness that baffles the eye and the understanding of any European; and what is worse, they invariably get into a passion if you refuse to let them take the book, and swear to the truth of what you know to be false. They have not the slightest sense of shame; and it not unfrequently happens that if you threaten them, they will, after the most solemn asseverations of their not having touched the article in question, actually bring it and lay it down before you. I found it almost impossible to keep poultry for the use of my family: for so soon as I bought them, the negroes sold them again in the market-place. All my servants kept poultry; and strange to tell, my hens during the short time I was able to keep them, never were known to lay an egg, but the negroes had always plenty to sell to me from their own

fowls. The cow sometimes would give no milk for several successive days; but I found that it was milked over night, and the bottle of milk sold in the market, which brought thirteen pence to the thief. The elder negroes teach theft to their children as the most necessary of accomplishments; and to steal cleverly, is as much esteemed by them as it was by the Spartans of old. I have had such incontrovertible proofs of this, that it was the knowledge of it that induced me to recommend separating the children from their parents, at the age when they are taught stealing as an important lesson.

It is very rarely that you can catch a negro stealing, for they have a thousand ways of throwing you off your guard. I recollect H. coming up one day with a spoon for medicine for her child: I noticed that the spoon was silver, and had upon it the initials of a gentleman's name whom I knew. I said, "Where did you get this spoon?" "Misses, I buyed him in a market for one bit," (four pence). I had

not then been long in the West Indies, but I afterwards found this nothing uncommon. It would be tedious to go on with such details; I only repeat that truth, honesty, or any fear of false swearing, is unknown in the negro character; at all events, if there are any individuals whose truth, whose honesty, or whose oath can be relied upon, I regret to say that after living many years among negroes, and studying their characters very carefully, I only met with two who shewed any fear of lying,—they were both creoles of St. Kitts, slaves in Trinidad, and very interesting characters as negroes—but I dare not in truth say more, even of those, because I have seen that their honesty and truth were not altogether unimpeachable, though as negroes they were indeed wonders.

Nothing can be more absurd than to talk of the gentle negro;—they are passionate and furious beyond all description; they flog, bite, kick, pinch, spit, and fly at each other like wild beasts, and all often about the merest

trifles. Husbands are most cruel to their wives, and will not under any circumstances be persuaded to desist from flogging them. Sunday is always the principal day for fighting; after they had returned from chapel, we often found it impossible to read, from the noise of their brawls. One morning we heard a desperate noise, and upon asking B. what was the matter, he said it was only R. "cobbing he wife;" that is, flogging. R. was a very respectable negro; he was practically free, because he had leave from his master to work for himself; but not being legally manumitted, he drew his allowances, and had many advantages which legal manumission would have deprived him of; as, in the case of sickness or old age he had every thing provided for him. B. said this with the greatest nonchalance, although the screams were violent. We sent for R.: he came in, and made his bow, apparently aware of what he had been sent for; "Massa, misses," said he, "I axe pardon for holding so much uproar, but no man could bear he wife to behave so as

mine do, and not punish well. I have stopt her," said he with great warmth, "and she'll be braver than I think she is, if she do the like again." "But don't you think, R., as your wife seems a civil sort of woman, that if you had calmly told her when she was in the wrong she would have begged your pardon, and done so no more? for it is dreadful to see how you negroes flog your wives; no white man dare do so." "Massa, they no need; they wive quite differ from we wive; (misses, I axe pardon), but massa, 'pose (suppose) you wife cheat you out of one joe (1*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.*), and go buy fine gown; no mend you shirt, but make fine dress; go out, no say one word; cook no supper, all house go wrong; go dance all night, you no at that dance; she top out all night, come in in a morning as impudent as one monkey to cook a breakfast,—massa, would you no lick her well? —mayhap law no let you do so; for if law go hinder me, I'd bear bad heart to S——, and some day I'd may be gie her a death's dose." We tried to persuade him that he had corrected

her at all events too severely, but his answer was this—"Massa, 't is to no prepise (purpose) to tell me all dat; white man have good wife, and they no know how heavy they'd lay on if they wife was to do so."

One evening Q. and her husband were, as her mother A. denominated it, trying who 'd kill each other fastest. Q. had been thrown down upon the stones in the court-yard; her master thought it time to interfere, and told T. her husband, to desist, but in vain; he said, "Massa, she be your nigger, but my wife." "But she's my flesh and blood," retorted her mother;" "and she be my sissy," said P., and, like furies, they fell upon T.; biting, scratching, kicking, and spitting, like cats, until it became necessary to lay violent hands on the whole party, and commit them for the night to the stocks to cool their rage. The cause of their quarrel was this:—Q. had not mended T.'s clothes properly, who was a tradesman, and at the same time he found out that she was making money by taking in needlework.

One night, very late, B. came and told me his wife K. was very bad indeed. She did not belong to us, but, being his head wife, she lived in his house. We went down to see her, and asked her if her mistress knew that she was sick. "Yes, massa, she had doctor to me; he gie me some tuff (physic) to take." "Did you take it?" "No."—"Why?" "'Cause it smell very bad."—"Massa," said B., "she fool too much; me will beat her well when da sick go off; she take ipecacuanha bush root to eat, and she eat too much, go kill herself." An emetic was given her, and she was soon relieved. We entreated B. not to beat her; but he did not mind what we said, and kept his word, flogging her severely. Indeed there never was a week during my residence in St. Vincent that K. was not flogged by B.; yet he spoke kindly enough at times to her, though he always kept her at a distance.

Negro mothers, with only one exception, I have found cruelly harsh to their children; they beat them unmercifully for perfect trifles—

omissions perhaps in punctilio towards them. I have frequently seen mothers flog their children severely for forgetting to say yes, or no *ma'am* to them; for a negro child is early drilled by them to call their mothers "ma'am," or a reputed father "sir." A. was smoothing clothes, when Q., her eldest daughter, came too near the ironing table; she still persisted in annoying her mother in this way, until A. took the hot smoothing iron and clapped it upon Q.'s back, which to this day bears evident marks of the mother's cruelty. I did not see this action, but A. has often told me of it, as a good story; and the mark between Q.'s shoulders is still to be seen plain enough. I have seen a negro beat and scratch her daughter violently, when that daughter, too, was within a few weeks of her confinement, merely for suffering a chicken to fly into a pail of water, although the bird escaped unhurt. I have also seen a mother severely beat her child, who was sickly, because he had eaten a roasted plantain which she intended for herself; and

when begged to desist, and when the boy was removed from her by his brother and another negro, she next day, on seeing him, almost bit off his ear, which continued a bad sore for many months after. I have seen a brother and sister *butt* each other like cows, bite, and try to fasten their teeth into the fleshy part of each other's shoulders: I have seen sisters box each other's faces, and bite so dreadfully, that they have borne the marks of each other's fury for weeks. I have known a mother who, whenever she saw her son, tried to stone him; and more than once she has cut his head severely; till at length so afraid was the child, that if he saw his mother at a distance, he would, as he expressed it, "run as if Jumbee were after him." But after all, this is *nothing* to what I witnessed in Trinidad,—the *island of experiment*,—of which hereafter.

One Sunday afternoon, H. came into the court-yard, scolding violently. V. took up the leaf of a table, and literally belaboured H. with it until she fell down; when V. threw herself

upon her, and fastened her nails and teeth in her. On all such occasions there is only one process—and that is, forcibly to separate the parties, and put them in the stocks. The quarrel originated in V. having reported that H. had been guilty of some theft.

One day, one of my children remarked that the glass of water she had got was not clean. B. was told civilly to bring another glass of water; but he stood immoveable; P. brought one. B. was evidently quite offended. After dinner, the child went into the back gallery to play, where B. had to pass in carrying out dinner: the child was at the time an infant, just two years old; we heard her coughing, crying, and apparently choking, and asked B. if anything had bitten the child. "No, massa, she cry for fun." Impossible, said I, she would not cry and choke so for fun; but Mr. C——, more alive to negro character than I was, noticed a table napkin in B.'s hand, and that the child's mouth was all over yellow. "What have you got there?" "Massa, noting at all

but one towel."—" Shew me." B. attempted to go away; but we secured the towel, in which was a tea-cup with mustard, mixed, too, with country peppers, and a tea-spoon. The child, when she had recovered the use of speech, told that B. had given her something that he said was good and sweet, and that she took it. Yet B. positively denied it, although the child's mouth was blistered both inside and out. This kind of revenge is common among negroes,—that is, hasty, momentary revenge; but no individual negro is apparently given to lay deep schemes of revenge; and, if he do not revenge himself quickly, he is not likely to do so at all. These little details may be deemed trifles by some: they are, indeed, trifles; but they are trifles which certainly illustrate negro character.

You may punish a negro either by flogging or confinement, and he may and will look sulky at the moment; but, strange to tell, the next half hour he forgets it, has no feeling of shame at all, and begins to talk and chatter,

the same as if nothing had happened. C. one of our negroes, was a singular character; full of frolic, he had a way of turning off every thing with a joke: if you spoke to him seriously, he ran off to the woods, and there he lived until he stood in need of anything, and then came back to work for a short time; he was a daring thief: flogging he did not mind at all, but he could not endure to be told of his faults. We were not a little annoyed, one morning, to learn that C. had broken into a gentleman's wash-house, and stolen clothes to a considerable amount. He was sent for, and he rather exulted in the theft than otherwise; when threatened, he produced some few articles, but said coolly, he had sold the rest, and in no way could they be found. He said, "Massa, you may go to massa ——, and tell him hang me if he like, for I no care one black dog," (a small copper coin; the expression meaning the same as when one says, in England, I don't care a farthing). He used to boast of this transaction, and say that "Massa ——— one

mean fellow, to go and tell my massa that I tieve from him; if I no tieve one leetle bit, what me get for sell?"

H. had a baby about two months old; she had nothing to do but to take care of it (being a domestic); the child was not in the estate nursery, as it would have been had the mother been a field negro. This infant fell sick, and the doctor attended it three times a day; but as the mother was stout and well, we considered that a sick nurse was unnecessary. She did not wash or cook either for herself or baby, but she always looked sulky when asked to attend upon her child. The third evening of little W.'s illness, I went down with the doctor to see him, but I was astonished to find the poor baby crying and rolling about the floor alone. I instantly called A., and asked where H. was. "Misses, I don't know:" every servant denied knowing anything of her, until I sent for their master, when N. said "she saw H. go out some little time since in full dress; she believed she must be for a dance." To pacify a poor

sick baby of two months old until two in the morning, I found no easy task: at that hour the mother arrived, astonished that massa and misses "should make such a work about he child, for he'd cry, and when done he'd go sleep."

I have seen Q. beat her child severely, when not six months old, and pinch her ears for crying, when she was teething. I have frequently seen X., a coloured domestic, throw broken bottles at her children, and they were often severely cut by them. A—, with her children, Q—, V—, Y—, and P—, were all domestics; she used to beat them so dreadfully, that every two or three days we used to be startled by the cry of "Oh! massa, misses, me mamma go murder me;" but any interference on our part was of little use, for A. was an expert boxer, and was, as she herself said, "match for any man." If her children behaved improperly, and she thought they were not punished as they ought to be, she took the task upon herself, and gave them a beating.

I do not recollect, during my residence in the West Indies, of ever seeing brother shew kindness to brother, except Z.: he was a coloured boy, a strange inconsistent character.

I wished him to be a tradesman, and to learn to read and write, and become a clever man: he was a creole of Dominica, and I felt the greater interest in him, as he was the illegitimate child of a Scotchman, who to his disgrace had not manumitted his son. His father was dead; but Z. was perfectly aware who his father was, and used to ask me about his relations in Scotland with considerable interest; yet this boy positively refused to learn to read, and when I asked why, he said, "'Cause I no want to larn." He was kind to his little sick half-brother O., and used to keep what he liked best, and give it to him: when he caught O. eating dirt, he used to whip him; but not with so much cruelty as most negroes. Z. had not a wish to better his situation, he was perfectly happy; he was dull and plodding in his appearance, but I do not mean depressed,

for he was a cheerful boy. He used to be very fond of talking to me when he was rubbing his tables, and asking about Scotland. There were some plates in the house which had houses figured upon them, and he wished to know if these were like Scotch houses: they did not much resemble houses at home, but I took out a volume containing views in Scotland. The first I happened to open was that of Pennicuik-House: he looked all amazement, and said, "Misses, that be far grander than even government-house." I told him government-house would be considered at home neither as a large nor handsome house. Then said he, "Misses, what like house have their governor?" I told him there was no governor; the king lived in England, and governed both England and Scotland, besides Ireland. "Misses, that same Ireland where the salt pork and Irish potatoes come from?" "Yes." "But misses, have massa King George grander house than that?" said he, still eying Pennicuik-House with astonishment.

One day I heard this boy's voice quarrelling; he was not very easily roused, but when once in a passion he was furious. I went to the window, and I heard him say to his mother X. "me no curse you, me only say that it be your blame *me no free.*" I called him up; he was pale with rage. I said, Z. what is the matter? —he swore violently, and did indeed curse his mother. I begged him to desist, and tell me quietly what was the cause of all this; he then said, "Misses, A. and all of dem (all the negro servants) call me a mulatto devil; it's my mamma's fault that I'm mulatto devil; and if she had behaved good, I'd been free, as my brother is," (he had a free brother in Dominica). His mother was certainly the most notoriously bad character that can be imagined, and rarely sober. I said, "Z. do you wish you were free?" "No, Misses, I no care about free; but I no like negers to hold impudence to me." At a time when almost every negro began to shew great discontent, all my domestics went off one

night, excepting A. and this boy Z.: they staid away two days, and Q. left a baby who was suckling to be taken care of in the best way we could. Z. behaved very well indeed; he cooked, made the market, &c. &c. It is true that Z. immediately announced a great rise in the markets, and it is unnecessary to say that under such circumstances I was obliged to pay whatever he demanded; for although I literally cleaned the house and made the beds, yet he cooked and marketed, and became of consequence to me. I asked Z. if he would like to go to Scotland,—he said, "has my fader any friends dey?" "Yes; would you like to go there?" "Yes, if you'd take me, and bring me back again." "Bring you back again, why that is the last thing I should think you would wish! you know if you went to Scotland you'd be free?" "Yes, Misses, I know that." "Well, why would you wish to come back?" "Misses, cause I no like to live in Scotland, for they say Scotch folk vorck

hard too much." "And would you rather be a slave here, than free in Scotland?" "Yes, 'cause I can sit down here softly."

It appears to me unnecessary to enter farther into detail, upon the subjects of honesty, truth, gentleness, and affection. I could produce abundance of anecdotes of the same kind, all of which are gained from personal experience; and I should have even abridged those I have given, had I not found that many publications are perpetually quoted as good authority upon negro character, when the author of them had no slaves of his own, nor, consequently, any of that kind of experience which elicit the points of negro character.

CHAPTER XI.

Distinction of rank among negroes—Tenaciousness on this point—Negro amusements—Parties and balls—Opinions of free service in England.

It is not much known in Britain that slavery admits of diversity of rank, but strange as it may sound, there are abundance of nominal ladies and gentlemen among slaves. Drivers (that is, black overseers), head boilermen, head coopers, carpenters or masons, head servants, these are all Mr. so and so: a field negro, if asked to go and tell a boilerman to come to his master, returns and says—Massa, Mr. —— will be here directly. They say, "Ma'am," to a domestic servant; or if a servant be sent on

a message from another family to you, your servant tells you, "there is a good lady wishes to speak wid you." Second boilermen, &c. &c. are not quite gentlemen, but stand in a middle rank, between the first, or gentlemen, and the third, or common field negro and under domestics. Upon an estate, a driver very often has a servant allowed him,—a young boy perhaps, of fourteen or fifteen; but on the Saturday or Sunday, when they go to their grounds, these head people hire negroes, sometimes belonging to the estate and sometimes not, to work for them, while they work very little themselves, and merely superintend.

There are many negroes who either partially cultivate their grounds, or do not cultivate them at all, and who live by hiring themselves out during the time they have to themselves. These are often paid in produce, at other times in money. In Trinidad the daily hire is about 3*s*. 2*d*. per day; when paid in produce, they get more, but then they have the trouble of selling it again: I have bought provisions

often from negroes, who I knew got them in hire.

The punctilio observed by negroes towards each other, is past the belief of those who never witnessed it; any omission of it, is sure to procure a beating. I recollect B. one day beating Y., a female servant, very severely: I begged to know the nature of her offence,—it was simply this: she had left the gate open, and B. asked her, "if she had left the gate open, to permit his chickens to walk about town;" when she answered "No," instead of No, sir: and for this he beat her. One morning A. a washerwoman, came in, and she said, "Hy'dee sissy H?" (how do you do sister, which is a term for "good woman"), very civilly to H.; but she did not speak to B.: he was of course all on fire; and going up to her with his arms a-kimbo, he begged to know "what for she gie herself so much impudence as say hy'dee to H., and no say good morning to him?" (*good morning*, he considered as more dignified). A. burst into a loud fit of

laughter, and said, "Eh! eh! you tink you go cheat me as you do Massa and Misses, you tell tory about a we on the estate, I would not peak to the like o' you." Hereupon B. hit her a blow in the mouth, and A. fell down, exclaiming she was dead. B. did strike her severely, but he knew what he was about; he had never up to this time been punished, and he calculated on this exemption. There was no person near me, so it was impossible for me to have done anything but remonstrate; and even this I had not courage to do with B., for he was not a person to talk to. A. was bruised considerably, but she went away quietly, and never again omitted behaving with respect to Mr. B.! as he styled himself.

It is quite common for negro slaves to give parties, and employ some one to write invitations for them; but the price of the party is always put at the bottom of the note. These invitations are expressed in the very same way as if one lady wrote to another, and I shall here faithfully copy one:—"Mr. —— requests the

honour of Mr. ——'s company to a dance and supper on Tuesday evening, at nine o'clock.—Three dollars." Some parties cost even more than this, and some less, according to the entertainment given. Drinking to excess is hardly ever known; and though our servants often went to dances, I never knew any of them return in the slightest degree intoxicated. X. was the only servant I ever saw who habitually drank to excess. B. I have seen twice a little tipsy, but not so as to incapacitate him for his work—he had just enough to make him unusually impudent; however, he was at all times very forward, and indeed negro men are most disagreeably so.

Some of the negro holiday entertainments are very grand indeed, and I have known a master of a house give up his public rooms to his negroes at Christmas to dance in. At that season, it is hardly possible to keep the servants in the house at all: it is very proper, indeed, that they should all have some time to themselves during the holidays; which last

always three days; but they all wish to be away the whole time; which proves rather inconvenient. Good Friday is not given as a holiday universally to the slaves; and although very many negroes ask, and are not refused, permission to go to chapel on that day, yet it is not a legal custom for the slaves to have the day—which I think an omission. There are in St. Vincent, so many resident Scotch proprietors, original Presbyterian families, in whose church Good Friday is not held, that it is probable it does not occur to them; but as they all attend the Established Church of England, and as the bulk of the Kingstown population are Episcopalians, it seems inconsistent that the slaves should work for their masters on that day. The slaves, however, all keep Easter as a time for buying new clothes; and though I had not so many requests to cut out new dresses as at Christmas, yet there were few who did not make a point of wearing something new. Many very good negroes come to town from a considerable distance regularly, on the

Sunday; they first sell their provisions, and then go to church or chapel; but although there is a gallery at church free of all expense for their use, they prefer going to chapel; and many of them have told me, that "chapel was far better than church." Negroes in town go to chapel pretty regularly, and they may always go of a morning if they choose; but where Sunday dinners are given, domestics cannot go of an evening: indeed, I preferred our people going in the morning, for if they got out at night, it was hardly possible to get them home again.

After morning service at the chapel, the country negroes eat cold fried jack-fish, and drink mobee, grog, or some other beverage with their friends, in the market place under a tree, and soon after, the well-disposed people may be seen trudging home again, with their empty trays and baskets. Mobee is a drink prepared with sugar, ginger, and snakeroot as a bitter; it is fermented, and is a wholesome, cooling beverage.

All well-disposed negroes are clean and neat on a Sunday; and it will not be found that those negroes who attend church or chapel regularly, are poorer, or their grounds in worse order, than those who do not go to service: the reverse indeed is the case, for I have uniformly seen that such negroes were well dressed, and their grounds in order, nor had they any want of money,—a plain proof that they are not denied abundance of time to cultivate the soil.

I recollect B. once quarrelling desperately with his wife K.: he was rather indisposed, and he told her to stay at home, and make soup for him; she refused, saying "it was Sabbath," and she would not sin so much as not to go to church; and she actually made good her point, and went. I told B. he was very silly to quarrel with his wife about such a thing, for he knew very well his soup would be made for him, whether his wife did so or not; when K. returned, he got out of bed, and whipped her for her disobedience. Now this woman was not then in communion with the Methodists, but

she sat there regularly, and considered herself a very good Christian indeed; yet she was not really a correct woman upon the most common points of morality, and did not care to break the fourth commandment in a variety of other ways; but she attached an undue importance to going to chapel, and I am convinced that this woman, from what she said to me, would have felt a superstitious dread, under any circumstances, had she ventured to stay away.

Sunday dances in Kingstown are not now common, but in the country they frequently occur. I had no idea that there would have been any difficulty in putting a stop to Sunday traffic and dances, until I became a resident upon an estate; and then I saw that with few exceptions the bare mention of such a thing produced discontent. In fact, no attempt at sudden changes can do good; whatever is productive of discontent to the negro, must be productive of alarm to the white population, and must operate as a preventive to the grand end that ought to be kept in view,—the mental

improvement of the negro population, until the time when the labourer of the West Indies shall be fitted to enjoy without one shackle, all the privileges of a British peasant. It is true indeed at this moment, that the free negro is more wicked, more deceitful, and more insolent than the slave: but this negro has been freed, without having acquired either the moral or religious habits of a civilized being; he has been born, probably brought up, in the contagious atmosphere of slavery;—nor am I afraid to assert, that any emancipation of slaves without some preparatory course, would disappoint the expectations of the most sanguine; for though legally free, their minds would remain under the slavish yoke of ignorance; and society, I am persuaded, must undergo a thorough change, before a free WORKING population will be found in the West Indies under British laws. I do not advert to what might be done by despotism:—all despotism is slavery,—and the nominal free labour of St. Domingo affords no data for opinion.

But, to return to the character and habits of negroes.—The amusements of the native African are much of the same kind as those of the creole negro; but they dance their own African dances to the drum, while the creole negroes consider a fiddle genteeler; though of an evening among themselves, they will sing, dance, and beat the drum, yet they would not produce this instrument at a grand party. Fiddles and tamborines, with triangles, are essential there.

I recollect obtaining the following information from B. as to one of those dances. "How many had you at the dance?" "More than two hundred." "What did they dance?" "Quadrilles and waltzes." "Did you not dance the English country dance?" No, they no fashion now-a-day." "Had you any refreshment during dancing?" "Yes." "What had you?" "Tea and coffee, and wine of different kinds, sangaree, lemonade, and porter." He also informed me they had an excellent supper. Such entertainments are quite common, and negroes enjoy themselves very much

at such times. Indeed, they will dance at any hour of the day. I recollect when our estates' people finished crop, a great band of them, in gay clothes, came to town to see us, preceded by the estate's fiddler, whose hat was trimmed up with ribbons: they had paid for getting these decorations themselves, because they said "they wished to surprise me, cause they knowed I had never seen the like afore." The house servants all went into the largest negro house and began to dance, although this was just the hottest time of the day; they danced with the greatest agility, not appearing at all inconvenienced by the heat; their dresses were really ludicrous,—one woman had her own Christian name and her master's surname marked in large letters in front of her dress; and she told me she paid half a dollar for getting it done. Having got wherewithal to make merry upon, they left us in about an hour, as jovial a party as could well be.

Negroes formerly used to be inclined, I was told, to rioting and fighting upon Christmas-

day, but now they all go to church; even those who do not go at any other time make a point of attending then. Many still dance upon Christmas night, but the greater proportion would not do so—but dance on the other two holidays I have named. Many of the white population informed me that Christmas holidays used formerly to be looked forward to with dread, but now there was a happy improvement indeed; and they said that unless I had lived in St. Vincent ten or twenty years back, I could hardly conceive the amazing change that had taken place. A gentleman who had left the colony in 1814, and returned about ten years after, told me that he saw a very great and evident advancement of civilization among the negroes. I do not state these circumstances to lessen one prudent exertion for the religious instruction and civilization of the negro, but to shew that the proprietors have not left all undone; and had the planters been better off for the means of spiritual instruction themselves, they would probably have been more alive to

the wants of their dependents in this respect. It is certain that negroes, *in their present state of civilization,* do not envy the free labourer of England. I speak of those who have been in England, and who have had opportunities of making comparisons. I recollect C., a domestic, going to England with his master; who asked him how he liked England, after he had been sometime in the country, and he answered, "That England very fine country to be sure, but nothing to be had there without money; people there very mean, they'd sell anything,—they sell sand, massa: if I had all the sand in Rabaca river, I could soon make rich here! Now would you believe it massa, they so mean they sell the very black soot out of the chimneys." I have myself conversed with this negro; he is a shrewd, intelligent, clever servant, knows both England and Scotland well; but, like many others I know, prefers the West Indies and slavery, to Britain and freedom. The last time this man left Britain, he came out without his master, and he was perfectly free to

have staid in Britain, had he had any inclination so to do; but the reverse was his choice,—he landed in St. Vincent, and came to see us, as cheerful as man could be. Now I am far from meaning to advance such opinions of negroes, as an argument in favour of the state of slavery. This man would, probably, with a different education, have thought differently: still there is proof afforded, by opinions and actions like this, of the exaggerated statements made respecting the intolerable cruelty and oppression of the planters. Were such statements correct, freedom under any circumstances would by all be preferred to slavery. There is one peculiar trait in the character of negroes, which I must not omit to notice, and which appears to be very inconsistent with the other features of their character. It is, that there is not any circumstance which provokes a negro so much as saying, or hinting anything disrespectful, with regard to his mother. However trifling the remark may be, the negro becomes instantly enraged, and nothing can induce him to forgive

those who so offend; it is an irremediable breach between the parties; and all the friends and relations take up the quarrel. I have seen many instances of the fury with which a negro instantly assails any one who offends in this way.

The negro cares little for his father; but many are at a loss upon this subject, for there are not a few females who are sufficiently cunning to obtain presents for their child from two or more men, whom they separately claim as the fathers of their children. I recollect V., who had two regular husbands, one in town and the other in the country; she had been confined of a daughter about ten days, when her grandmother exhibited to me the presents of the papa to his little girl, which consisted of two nice white frocks; but V. was determined to have something from both husbands; and when the country husband came to see her, she cursed him, "'cause he had never had once had a thought of his pic-a-ninny;" he retorted, and she scolded in return; her mother and

sisters flew upon him, boxed him, and turned him out of the yard. Many negro men, of good character otherwise, have two or more wives; and strange to tell, these wives live on good terms with each other; they often make friendly visits to each other; but there is always one favourite for the time being, and it often happens that this same wife has been the favourite for fifteen or twenty years. There is no jealousy on her part so long as matters are openly conducted; but all intrigues are disliked, and are a frequent cause of quarrels.

From what I have said above, it will be gathered that negro females also often have several husbands: but they have always one in particular, with whom they live. The really respectable female negro, however, has generally only one husband; and in this one particular only, is the respectable female negro more moral than the male.

CHAPTER XII.

Conversations with native Africans.

THE subject of the present short chapter, I consider an interesting one,—the detail of conversations, which I had with native Africans. I give their testimony precisely as I received it from them; and in what follows, I beg my readers to keep in view, that I only pledge myself to relate faithfully what was told to me by the negroes themselves. It is impossible for me to vouch for the truth of details coming from a set of people who, as a people, have so little regard for truth. The only way is, to compare the different accounts of negroes of the same national origin; and whenever they do not materially disagree, it is probable that

something approaching the truth has been described. I shall also mention the character of the individual as I go along, which ought always to be kept in view.

The details which I present are far from being meant as conveying any apology for the slave-trade, as it existed before the abolition; indeed I never heard the slave-trade mentioned with half the horror in Britain that I have heard it spoken of in the West Indies: and never let it be forgotten that Britain began the slave-trade,—not the colonists; and it is a fact which admits of no denial, that the British government *forced* the colonists to cultivate the islands by the labour of negro slaves imported from Africa; nay, it is a fact, that the colonists of Barbadoes were decidedly averse to this; but the mother country insisted upon compliance.

In Trinidad, government refused to grant land to settlers (who were not, as they resolved, qualified to receive it), unless they would produce a certain number of slaves, according to

the proportion of acres they wished to cultivate; and so particular was the government upon this point, that if the slaves died, and their numbers were not kept up by increase or purchase, the land and the slaves upon it were forfeited to the crown. This I merely mention, to shew that the first and criminal part of the whole transaction rested upon the government alone, and not upon the colonists: a fact, also, that is too frequently kept in the back ground. Of all national iniquities, none surely ever exceeded the slave-trade; but still I feel convinced, from the consistent details of many native Africans, examined at different times, and even in different colonies, that the situation of those who were removed to the West Indies, was very greatly improved in every respect.

This fact—if it be a fact—is no apology for so sinful a traffic. My desire is, only to state truths; and truth ought to be stated, whatever may be the consequences to which it leads.

F. was a native African, an Ebo negro, of uncommonly good character, but not at all

clever;—a common field negro,—she had been many years ago offered her freedom as a reward for her faithful services, but declined it, saying she preferred remaining as she was; she worked for some time after this upon the estate, as a nurse, but at the period I speak of, she ceased to be able to do anything: at an early period of her life she had suffered severely from rheumatism, and her joints were much distorted from it; she was also much bent down from old age, and latterly it became difficult to make her contented or happy. She was in many respects savage: and at times insisted upon lying on the floor without any clothes; neither was she willing to have her head tied with a handkerchief, and her naturally black woolly hair had become white from age. She would rarely use a spoon for her calialou soup, which, with a little boiled rice, was all she relished; and for drink, she liked weak rum and water: her appearance was anything but pleasing, it was at times almost disgusting: but she despised and refused all the comforts of civilized life;

and a stranger to have seen her, as I daily did, lying on her mattress on the floor, using her hand for a spoon to her soup, and hardly a rag upon her, might naturally have exclaimed, "Look at the brutality of this poor negro's owner!" But, had he been conversant with native Africans, he would have perhaps felt as we did, all the desire to render her comfortable according to our interpretation of the word; but he would, no doubt, also have experienced the utter impossibility of convincing her that cleanliness, a few clothes, and eating her victuals like a civilized being, were real comforts. She used to say to me, when I spoke to her of such things, "No tease me, misses, me one very good neger; *let me be.*" "Let me be," is a frequent expression among negroes, and they have probably learnt this and other decided Scotticisms from the number of Scotch managers and overseers.

One day I asked F., "how big were you when you left Africa?" "Misses, me big young woman." "How were you taken?"

"Misses, Ebo go war wid a great grandee massa; him massa take Ebo many, many; tie hand, tie foot, no could run away, misses: they gie us only so leetle for yam (as she said this, she took up a splinter of wood, and held it to signify that the food she got was as insignificant in point of size). Well, misses, they take me mamma too; she be one nice nigger, fat so; they take her, kill her, boil her, fry her, yam her (eat her) every bit all: dey bringed her heart to me, and forced me yam a piece of it. Well, misses, after dat dey sell me to another grandee for cottons, and he send me a Guinea coast: and when I comed there, the first buckra I seed, misses, I started all." "Were you afraid of the white man?" "No, misses, no of he, but of he colour; look so queer, misses, I axe ye pardon." "Did you know you were going to be sold to a white man?" "Yes, misses, me happy at dat; neger massa bad too much, white massa him better far, Africa no good place, me glad too much to come a white man's country."

"Well, what did you do when you were landed?" "Old massa buy me, old misses very good; she make nice bamboo for me (clothing), teached me 'bout God," said she, "get me christened; me quite happy; me (said she with much exultation) never once punished. Old massa love me, old misses love me, me loved dem; me get good husband; me never have sore heart but once, when my H. (her only child) go dead. Misses, oh, she handsome too much: take pain in side, dey all do for her, but God say no; and so she go dead, and so me just take young H—, (a young negro woman, upon the estate, of the same name as her own daughter); she have no daddy or mamma, and me take her for my own, being as I was her god-mamma." The principal enjoyment of this poor woman was in telling old stories to the family; but the servants were very harsh to her, and I frequently caught the little negroes hidden under a sand-box tree, pelting her while she lay at the open house door, with hard green mangoes, which they gathered for the purpose.

I. was a Guinea-coast female negro, of only tolerable character, a common field negro. I asked her when she was brought from Africa? "When me big woman." Were your father and mother alive when you left it? "No, misses, but I had husband and one pic-a-ninny." And were you not very much grieved when you found yourself away from them? "Misses, me husband bad too much: beat me one day, two day, tree day, every day. Misses, me husband *here* go beat me too much (meaning if, or when he beat me too much), or when me no really bad, me go a manager, or come a massa, to complaint, and he settle all. Misses, me have one pic-a-ninny in a Guinea; but me have D—, I—, K—, L—, M—, N—, and J—, here; cooper O— for husband; he bring me some tick (fuel) often. L. big now—help vorck a provision-ground; little M. she take broom, sweep a house; N. he little too much, but me get fish and bamboo for him. Oh, misses, is Africa good country? No good people say dat surely."

P., a female field negro, a good character upon the whole, and willing to work; left Africa when not quite grown up; but evidently recollected it perfectly. "Would you like to go back to your country?" "Eh, misses, me no like dat. St. Vincent fine country—good white massa dey."—"Were you slave or free in Africa?" "Misses, me one time slave, one time free, just as our grandee massa fight (beat) next grandee massa." "And you would rather be here?" "Yes, misses, I no like me country at all."

Q., a female field negro, of the very best character, an excellent field labourer; cheerful, contented, and intelligent, and I can say, affectionate; in manner a perfect savage, yet not rude; for although she never spoke to us without first turning her back, and bursting into a loud fit of laughter, yet she meant no insult by it. Whenever Q. had any request to make to me—and her requests were very numerous—in the dress-making line, she used to come to the door, and turning her back, and laughing as I

have described, she stood still, and half turned her head round with a sly smile, until I used to say, "Well, Q., what do you want?" Then it was always, "Misses, me just buyed one handkerchief for me, will ye mark me name for me?" or it might be a gown or petticoat, &c. At first Q. was very shy of speaking, but her request once granted, she would turn round and talk with great spirit. Her house was neat and well furnished, according to her ideas of comfort, and she and her husband rarely quarrelled; she could fight when she thought it necessary, just to shew that she was no coward, but she was not given to boxing; and was, and I hope is, in every sense of the word, a good negro.

"What nation are you of, Q.?" "An Ebo." "Would you like to go to Africa?" "Misses, me hope never to see dat country no more: misses, me hear tell dat some white massas go a England, and tell dat neger wish for go again to Africa, and say that neger tink dey go to Africa when dey go dead." "Is this not true,

Q.?" "Misses, me never hear one neger say so, me no tink dat; me know very well, God make me above, God make one breath, put one breath in a we (all of us); God make us live, God take away breath, we go dead; misses, me notion is, dis breath and life all as one."—Meaning that without breath we cannot live. "How old were you when you left Africa?" "Me big the same as now." "Were you free or slave there?" "Misses, me *born free.* Ebo war wid anoder grandee massa—take me, me daddy, me mamma, me husband; sell me, dem, keep me slave to dat grandee massa, no slave to himsel, but to one of him country: me slave to one neger, massa; he flog me, curse me, use me very bad, me heart-broke; he want calicoes, take me a coast, sell me for calicoes; me dance for joy to get away from neger massas." "And you are now happier than you ever were in Africa?" "Yes, misses, Africa one bad country."

R. was a female field negro, rather advanced in life: although only a field negro, she was

very much civilized, extremely polite, kind, affectionate, but cunning occasionally; decently attired at all times, extremely gay on holidays, and at church. She was a good work-woman, and her provision grounds were in fine order; she called herself a Roman catholic, but went to the Methodist chapel almost every Sunday. She was always much respected by the other negroes, as well as by her master and mistress. She had evidently confused notions of Mahomedanism, but says, "she never hear tell of Mahomet, but knowed there was one good man who came far off from where the sun rise, he tell all people be good." R. had one great fault, not generally to be found in a female negro of otherwise so exemplary good character: she was fond of having a number of husbands, and of changing them often; I have known her have three different husbands in six weeks. "What country were you of, R.?" "Misses, me a Mandingo." Did you like your country? "Misses, suppose Mandingo be my own country, me no like it." What

were you there? "Me be waiting maid to a grandee massa's lady; she have fine clothes, necklace, bracelet, rings. Oh! misses, you 'd really like to seen her going to church to pray." "Was she kind to you?" "Misses, she flog me too much; pinch me; if me no dress her pretty, she box me ear for me; she handsome too much, clear black kin, so smooth." "What did you get to eat?" "For yam (eatables) misses, me got rice, one leetle river fish—and misses, now and den, when she very good, gie me ripe plantain, and banana." "Which country do you like best?" "Misses, Buckra country very good, plenty for yam (to eat), plenty for bamboo (for clothing); Buckra-man book larn (can read) now misses; Buckra-man rise early,—like a cold morning; neger no like cold." "And I suppose, then, you'd like to lie in bed in the morning?" "Yes, misses, till sun hot, den go vorck; cold, no good to neger kin (skin), but misses, me like to go see a cold of England." "Would you? and you know," I added, "that if you were in England you would

be free." "Yes, misses, me know dat perfect, but me no like to top dey, only see a place, and see many a many white face, and den back to St. Vincent;—misses, is true, no plantain or banana in a England?" "Yes, quite true; but there are other fruits that I think as good." "Eh, eh, misses, noting so good as plantain and banana."

S. was a second boiler-man, middle-aged, with an uncommonly cheerful, frank countenance, good looking, extremely agreeable in his appearance; a negro of the very best possible character, and very intelligent and affectionate; diligent in his duties, attentive both to his master and to his family; and had only one wife, with whom he had lived in great comfort. He was fond of his children, loved them apparently alike; was kind to his wife, gave her nice dresses, and both of them were civil in their deportment as negroes; no one ever merited the title of a good negro more than S., and the longer I knew him,—indeed, up to the moment that I bade him adieu,—I had more and more reason to

respect him.—" S., what country did you come from ?" " Ebo, misses." " Do you remember Ebo?" " Eh, misses, vay well indeed." " Do you like it better than this?" " Misses, me like Ebo well enough den, but me go dead if me go dey now." " How so?" " Misses, noting good a yam (to eat) in Ebo like a here, no salt pork dey, no salt beef,—poople dey just go fish in a river, boil a leetle fish, boil a leetle rice, so go yam it," (then eat it). " But you had yams there?" " Misses, only the grandee." "And you were not a grandee?" " No, misses, me free, no slave, but me one poor man dey; me vorck every day, else eat none." " Whether would you prefer being free in Ebo, or a slave here?" " Misses, Africa no good people, no trust in dem; one slave to-day, you free to-morrow; free to-day, slave to-morrow: your grandee massa make war wid toder massa, (king in their sense of the word), take ye, never mind how great ye be; ye never know how to do vorck, he flog ye; if ye no do a ting, he whip again: noting to yam, but leetle rice.

Misses, a we glad too much, when we sent a coast o' Guinea for a Buckra to buy us."

V. was a common field negro, a quiet but not an intelligent negro, apparently attached to his master, worked well for him, and had his own grounds in very good order; he was not given to fighting,—had many comforts in his house, such as tables, chairs, good bedstead, and crockery-ware, and was always neat and tidy on holidays and Sundays. V. was never in disgrace, and merited the title of a good negro.

"What nation are you of, V.?" "An Ebo." "Would you like if massa were to free you, and send you to your own country again?" "Eh, eh, misses, me no like dat; me country wicked too much." "They don't eat men in Ebo, do they?" "No, misses, dey no eat men; but raw beast-flesh warm be very nice, me tink dat good yet; S. can tell ye same tory, misses; Ebo eat no men; when Ebo take people in a war from a grandee massa, Ebo no eat 'em: Ebo sell 'em a Guinea coast;—but when Coromantee take a

people when they go war with grandee massa, da Coromantee eat all of dem." How do they eat 'em? "Misses, me no seed dem eat 'em, but me heared in Ebo 'bout it; and old granny F. tell a we 'bout it, when she take by the Coromantees. Dey cook a men in dat place. Misses, Africa wicked too much; me rather go dead afore me go back dey." Were you slave there, or free? "Me free man one day, slave t'other day; no good people dey—cheat too much." How old were you when you left Africa? "Me one big man."

W. was a carpenter; good tempered, not intelligent, but very indolent. "What nation are you of?" "Mandingo." "How old were you when you came to the West Indies?" "One big man." "Do you like St. Vincent or Africa best?" "Eh, eh, misses, me no one fool; me know better dan dat; Africa one very bad country, dey go vorck poor slave to death; noting for yam, only whip, whip constant; me like where me be." "And were you slave or free in Africa?" "Me one free man; dey take

me, carry me in a coast of Guinea, sell me a Buckra capin; me very glad to go wid dem." "But had you no friends you were sorry to leave in Africa?" "Misses, friend to-day, no friend to-morrow; no trust in dey; your daddy want any ting or your mamma, dey go sell de pic-a-ninny, to buy it."

X. was a faithful, working negro; kept his own grounds in high order; was fond of money, to hoard it up: he went about in good weather with hardly a rag to cover him. X. had a good deal of dry humour; he had a very curious, and rather savage countenance, and he bore his country's mark upon his chest, and also upon his cheeks. He was excessively avaricious, and acted invariably on the principle of trusting no one. He reared poultry very successfully. I believe he was attached to us—yet if I could not produce the exact change to pay him for his fowls, he refused to let me have them; and he was the only negro I ever met with who shewed the slightest want of confidence in this respect towards me. X. made a great deal of money; but what he did with it none could tell. On

Sundays, however, he was an amazing dandy; and had his collar so stiff, that he would not have turned his head for the world, lest he should disarrange it. X. never had any settled wife; he tried to get one several times, but they always left him, as they said, "'Cause he so miserly, misses; he plit (split) one black dog if he could;" a coin, value one-sixth of four-pence.

"How old were you when you came to St. Vincent?" "One big man, so big me be now." "What nation were you of?" "The Mandingo." "Were you free or slave?" "Misses, me be one very great grandee; not one grandee massa, but one great grandee; me hae slave to wash me, me hae yams for eat, fresh pork; me hae no vorck for do, only me go fire at bird in a bush, for yam: well, misses, one grandee massa send always hunting for people; so dey take me in a bush, make me vorck hard,—me never vorck afore, me no know'd how to vorck; dey flog me, say me no good for noting, send me a Guinea coast, sell me Buckra capin."

"But surely you would like to go back to Mandingo?" "No, misses; Mandingo one very bad country; me no have vorck too much now, me hae yam, tanias, plantains, every ting very good."

Y. was a field negro, an uncommon character. He was employed, when a young man, in a pasture in the upper part of the estate, at some distance from the dwelling-house: he neglected the stock, allowing them to trespass upon the canes in every direction; and there was no possibility of holding any communication with him,—for whenever he saw any white person coming near where he was, he ran like a deer, hid himself in the brush-wood, and defied all pursuit. The pasture he was upon commanded so extensive a prospect, that he had full view of any one who came in that direction. If he saw a human being approach, he made off to one of his hiding places, which was generally on the top of the highest and thickest tree, where he formed a complete bed or hammock of the wild canes, which grow there so luxuriantly.

In the course of his sojourning there, he killed four young cattle, besides sundry calves, sheep, and lambs; he skinned, cleaned, and half-roasted them, and then covered them over with leaves, for his sustenance. This conduct lasted for two years and a half, when at last he was brought down; he was not punished, but his duty changed; and from that moment, except occasional intoxication, he behaved uncommonly well. Y., from the period I knew him, was a very quiet good negro; he seldom smiled, but was, nevertheless, very contented; he was uncommonly handsome, and reckoned a first-rate dancer, both of creole and African dances: it was indeed surprising to witness the grace, gravity, and majesty of his demeanour. He was not very intelligent, but a good workman, and kept his grounds in beautiful order; he was not uncivil, but his manners were rather forbidding.

"Y., do you recollect your own country?"
"Not very much, but me member the ship."
"Were you free or slave in your own country?"

"Me no know." "Would you like to return to Africa." "No, misses, every neger tell me, me country one very bad place; me no wish to leave dis country." "If you were free, would you not like to see Africa again?" "No, misses, I'd like to see England, and den come a St. Vincent; me like to see English cold."

Such are some of the details I received from native Africans. Of their title to credit, let the reader judge. The condition of the Mandingo, or Ebo negro, in his own country, however wretched that condition may be, can be no apology for negro traffic; neither is the contentedness of the African with his condition in the West Indies, any argument against emancipation; but these details and avowals undoubtedly afford the consolation of knowing that the negro has not been made more miserable by the unnatural traffic that deprived him of his home; and some proof, also, that the inhuman conduct of slave proprietors has been exaggerated.

Negroes have often a strong desire to see

England; and when you ask them what it is they particularly wish to see, it is either the cold of England, or the number of white faces.

A gentleman of St. Vincent once sent me a lump of ice from North America, wrapped in straw. I instantly sent for our domestics, and said to them, "There is ice,—do you know what that is?"—"Yes, misses, English water." They got a hammer, and broke off some pieces, putting it in their mouths; when they screamed out and jumped, from mere astonishment; and after having ejected it, they all begged for some rum to cure the cold of the English water.

Generally speaking, negroes do not regard England and Scotland in the same light: this I believe proceeds from two causes. Scotchmen are more generally strict, and are proverbially active and economical, abroad as well as at home: and perhaps there are not two qualities which the majority of negroes dislike more thoroughly. I recollect a ship arriving one afternoon in Kingstown bay, when we sent B. to inquire if there were any passengers, and

who they were,—he returned saying, there was no one except one Buckra man. "And who is he?" "Me no know—me no tink it worth while to ask he name; he one Cotch-man." "And why is it not worth while to ask a Scotchman's name?" "'Cause they all mean, hold-purse fellows; dey go *so*," said he, walking some paces, holding down his head, and with a slouching gait; "dey go mean—me no like dem." Yet B. was addressing himself to his master and mistress, both Scotch; a tolerably good proof, that negro domestics speak with little restraint what they really think. The mere active habits of the Scotchman are also disagreeable to the negro. With few exceptions, exemption from all employment is the *ne plus ultra* of a negro's idea of enjoyment.

D., one of our negroes, used to say, that monkeys could speak well enough if they liked, but "dey cunning too much,—for dey knowed if dey speak, massa would soon make em vorck."

CHAPTER XII.

The master and slave — Punishment — Alleged over-working.

Much has been written, and still more said, respecting the inhumanity of planters in the treatment of their slaves. I do not speak of this treatment previous to the time I lived in the West Indies; for matters for many years before that period even, were not managed as it is generally believed. I shall not attempt to describe anything as fact, to which I have not been an eye witness.

In the commencement of this work I spoke shortly of the calumnies that had been circulated respecting the general character and mode

of life of the colonists; but far more injurious and unjust than these, have been the calumnies propagated respecting their treatment of the negro. It is impossible to conceive, that a denial of the truth of those statements which I have called calumnies, and facts offered in support of that denial, can be objected to by the most determined vilifier of the planters. It is equally a right and a duty to defend a class which has been aspersed, and to which I myself belonged. I am not, in doing this, defending the principle of slavery, or even arguing in favour of continuing in the hand of the colonial masters, powers which may possibly have been, and may be again abused.

The first remark I would make is, that coming out as I did, almost determined to find fault (and which most disinterested Britons do), my first impressions were by no means favourable in respect to the general style of language adopted towards domestics. It appeared to me haughty and peremptory; and more particularly, I thought, from creoles than

from Europeans, to their negroes and servants. But I had to learn, by sad experience, that in the present state of negro civilization, to treat negroes as we treat English servants, is a rule liable to many exceptions.

I think the details already given respecting negro character and negro habits, will have partly prepared the reader for this admission. It is undoubtedly true, that in the majority of cases, servants are spoken to in a more decided tone, and reprimanded with more severity, than English servants would submit to; but where it is found that a servant will do nothing unless he is spoken to in this manner, and that he respects you more, and actually seems better pleased when addressed so, I should suppose there are few persons who, if put to the trial, would not adopt the usual method of address.

I am acquainted with some individuals in the colonies, whom I highly respect, whose constitutional mildness and forbearance are such, that they cannot speak to their servants, upon

any occasion, whatever their faults may be, otherwise than with that amiable gentleness which one would think could not fail to win even the most obdurate. But I have been witness in the establishments of those individuals how lamentably wicked, how negligent, how particularly insolent, those servants were: and upon more than one estate, where this management was also pursued, the result was precisely the same. I have conversed with many upon this subject; and I never met with one who did not bitterly regret being obliged to speak so peremptorily to their servants, and considered it as one of the most disagreeable of duties. But this is a trifling matter, comparatively with the stories which have been circulated respecting negro punishment,—inflicted, too, as it is alleged, from mere whim and caprice.

It is a delicate matter upon which I am about to treat; but I will not shrink from stating facts. The truth is, that there are few negro servants who have not at one time or other been whipped, though rarely after man-

hood; that is, whipped with a switch, or, if for a very flagrant offence, perhaps with a horse-whip.

Such punishments do take place on almost all estates, though not frequently, and as I sincerely believe, never for faults which would not in England subject the offender to punishment of a far more serious nature. Now, without going farther, I would ask, in what does the young negro differ from the apprentice, the school boy, or any young person in England? Are not thieving apprentices flogged,—and disobedient children, and idle school boys, and all, at the will, or caprice, it may be, of those who have any authority over them? Or in what particular does the grown-up negro, who perjures himself or commits other gross offences, differ from the man who, for similar crimes, is sentenced by a magistrate to be whipped? If there be the same criminality, the punishment must be equally just. Does the proprietor of a negro not feel for his fellow creatures, upon such occasions?—some say, he cannot feel, he

cannot be humane, if he punishes his negro. This, I need scarcely say, is miserable argument. Does the tender and affectionate, but conscientious parent, feel nothing for his child when he punishes it for the commission of a fault? Does the foreman of a jury not feel when he delivers his verdict of guilty? And will any one deny to a judge a kindly feeling—all sentiment of sympathy and pity, because he at times pronounces sentence of death upon the guilty criminal?

Suppose a negro steals provisions from his neighbour's grounds, though not at first to a great extent; he is pardoned, but the master remunerates the other. The offence is committed a second time, and another pardon follows to the thief, and remuneration again must be made to the other slave, who, unless that were done, would beat the aggressor with the utmost cruelty. Is it not apparent in such cases, that some punishment is necessary? Now the question has hitherto been, *what* punishment? I admit the cruelty of all corporal

punishment; but we find the British legislature sanctioning the infliction of severe corporal punishment in the army and navy; and why? because it is contended, the state of discipline required in the army, renders it necessary: and is it not certain, that a system of discipline is necessary in a colony where the negro population out-number the free, twenty fold? Government which settled the colonies, and sanctioned slave labour, no doubt perceived this; and in granting the power of inflicting a corporal punishment to *one-eighth* part of the extent of that sanctioned in the army, conceived it necessary in the *then* state of West India society. It is a power, which may be abused; and which therefore ought not to be continued one hour beyond the time that necessity renders it imperative; but I do not hesitate to say, that occasions do arise, when that necessity is far more apparent than it ever is in the army, whether we look to the difference between negro and European character, or the danger of weakening the authority of the free, over the

negro population; and I contend that the slave proprietor, yielding to this necessity, does not prove that he is destitute of feeling,—for I have minutely examined the subject, and I never yet found in any one instance of corporal punishment, that the master had not been driven to it by repetition of such conduct, to which no one, as a master, could submit.

It is true, that hitherto every proprietor of a negro has considered slavery to consist in his having power over his slave, in so far as to punish him to the amount of thirty-nine lashes. Now the point we have to attend to is, whether such punishments do ever take place to that amount: and if they do, what are the occasions upon which such punishments are inflicted?—have masters been actuated by caprice and whim?—and have they justly earned the character of inhumanity? Every thing I have seen leads me to state conscientiously, that the punishment of thirty-nine lashes seldom takes place; and certainly never for an offence that would not be followed, in Scotland, by trans-

portation for life, and in England most likely by capital punishment. When punishment is considered necessary, I have too often witnessed the distress of a master; and have known myself what it was to feel real pain, when this had to be resorted to in consequence of serious misconduct in negroes, in whom I was really interested, and whose misconduct I knew from experience, could not be otherwise corrected.

In former times, the managers employed upon estates were not always possessed of those patient and humane dispositions, which all who undertake the management of negroes ought certainly to have; but this remark I make not from my own personal observation, but from what I have often heard stated by many in common conversation, in the West Indies. They were seldom men of any education, and ignorant how to treat the negro; and there is reason to believe that they carried punishment to un unwarrantable length. But even then, there were many humane managers, whom the negroes looked up to with regard.

Managers are now generally a different description of persons—many of them are well informed, superior men. If I am to believe the testimony of the negroes from many different estates, whom I was often in the habit of conversing with, the kindness of the managers on the different estates to which they belonged was conspicuous.

I do not feel inclined to have the same unlimited confidence in overseers; for although they have it not in their power to exercise any cruelty upon the negroes, in the way of excessive corporal punishment, yet they can annoy them, in many other ways, especially by reporting faults in exaggerated colours.

Managers formerly often lived very dissolute lives, and this was a matter deeply to be deplored; for negroes invariably look up to the white people as an example. But the proprietors have, for many years back, made every exertion to obtain men of good character, in point of sobriety and morality; and where they may have been unsuccessful in obtaining such,

it has not been from any indifference on the subject.

A manager's situation is one that requires great exertion both of body and mind. He has to attend not only to the agriculture of the estate, but also to the negroes, whose health must occupy his attention. He must almost daily watch the young people, who require an uncommon degree of care, owing to a propensity to which we have already alluded—viz. to eat earth and dust. From the moment a little child begins to creep about, the danger begins, and the minutest attention is required to prevent the habit gaining ground.

There is no branch of a manager's duty more important or more difficult, than the management of the young people until their fifteenth or sixteenth year. If the proprietor be absent, all this devolves upon him; but when the proprietor is resident, the responsibility is in part removed from him. If the proprietor be a married man, his wife has her full share of the management of the children, the sick, and the

aged. I recollect many instances of real personal kindness from a manager to the negroes; even on very small properties, where the situation could not have enabled him to do more than merely pay his way: let one such case suffice. A negro belonging to —— had been absent from the estate for many months. He had never borne a good character, and was generally considered as a complete reprobate. Search had been often made for him in vain,—he eluded all pursuit. At length one afternoon, two very respectable looking negroes came to my door, and making a bow they said, "Misses, we've brought C. to you; we knowed how great a runaway he has been, so we tied his hand behind his back, and brought him safe to massa; for we knowed whose neger he was, though he denied it." His master being from home, I applied to a gentleman in the neighbourhood for advice; who told me the best plan was to send him to gaol all night, for security, and next day his master could do as he thought fit. The poor creature was dirty,

emaciated, and his clothes in a deplorable state. After giving him a comfortable meal, he was conveyed to gaol, though he resisted as stoutly as he could. Next day his master sent him back to the estate, but not until he had held a long conversation with him. He accused him of having taken to eating dirt, which he positively denied: however, to those who know the peculiar appearance which it gives to the countenance, it is hardly possible to be mistaken in this matter. His master asked him if he was unhappy—if he had any complaint to make—if the manager or overseer, or any of the people had quarrelled with him? But C. could assign no reason for his constantly absenting himself; "but massa," said he, "if you 'll try me once more, I will go work, and do no more bad. I 've been one very bad neger to you and to Mr. ——," meaning the manager also. Every thing was done to make this poor fellow change his habits; but he was so desperate a character, so given to drunkenness, and so determined a thief, that he was hardly ever at work, and was a constant runaway.

This mode of life soon began to undermine his constitution, although he was a young man, not much above twenty years. At last he appeared to be dying; and his master brought him to town to try what could be done for him. He loathed every sort of food,—wine was the only thing he cared for; and it was at this time that he informed me, "that when he was sick afore times, Mr. —— (the manager) used to give him often part of his own dinner, and wine and water." Bad as C.'s character was, he frequently used to say, "The manager was good too much to me."

It would occupy more time than is necessary for the purpose, to relate other acts of the same description; but I have known many strong proofs of the kindness of managers, who were not situated upon extensive properties.

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